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HOW CONSERVATION HAS CHANGED FROM 1975  
TO 2005

By

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

University of the Arts London

College of Fashion

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to examine the nature of the changes that took place within paper conservation, a section of the practice/occupation of material conservation, in the United Kingdom during the period from 1975 to 2005.

In the 1970s, conservation emerged as a distinct practice within the museum sector from two sources: semi-skilled cleaners and movers of art objects, and the traditional restorers of cultural objects. From then until the end of the century, it continued to grow and mature. The nature of this growth and the changes that took place within it will be modelled with the objective of enabling future changes within conservation to be evaluated.

The evaluation of conservation in this manner will determine its definition as an industry. The changes will be assessed by highlighting their effect on one section of conservation practice, namely paper conservation. This practice concentrates on the conservation of cultural material created using paper, including such categories of artefacts as watercolours, fine art prints, drawings, ephemera, archival materials, books and all paper-based sculpture.

During the period between 1970 and 2000, paper conservation developed from being a fledgling practice to becoming an accepted standard within the museum sector. In becoming so, it placed great emphasis on professionalism. This provided paper conservation with a template for change, a process through which it could develop and grow. Paper conservation embraced this process as a means of providing a set of standards to which it could adhere, but also as a means of garnering greater acceptability for its approach within the wider museum sector. Issues relating to the development of a profession and professionalism will be further explored as part of the literature review. Organisational change was also considered to have a relevance to the development of paper conservation, and this, too, will be explored within the literature review.

Steps to professionalise conservation and subsequent changes in the wider museum sector were seen to have had the most impact on the structure of conservation. They may also have had relevance for the practice itself. Paper conservation was successful in having its occupational aims accepted throughout the museum sector, and this has further implications for those interested in researching by occupations of the professionalisation process. An understanding of the nature of this change, and how paper conservation reached its goal of acceptance for its values, is indispensable for those involved in decision-making within conservation today, and in the future.

The thesis is based on an analysis of documents from the period directly relating to change within the field of conservation. It also includes interviews with personnel who were practising conservators, the providers of conservation education, and officers of the different agencies representing conservation.

Research questions were formed from this analysis, and multiple case studies were undertaken to analyse these questions.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Sean and Carmel who constantly promoted education as the one truly valuable personal wealth;

To my daughters Jennifer and Huan Er as an example that all things are achievable;

And to Barbara with gratitude without whose support this research could not have been realised.

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# Chapter One

## 1.1 Conservation

Conservation is a descriptive term used to explain the approach taken by individuals responsible for the care and preservation of cultural material. It reflects a set of values and beliefs to which conservators conform and with which they identify, as they plan the appropriate course of care for material for which they are responsible.

Conservation aims to minimise the potential risks facing cultural objects, to protect them from the adverse effects of climatic and chemical deterioration, and to safeguard our heritage, not only for ourselves, but for future generations. Conservators decide on the appropriate intervention with which to treat the material being cared for. Organic-based materials are susceptible to change and decay. An understanding of this process has been one of the key factors in the emergence and development of conservation as a distinct discipline.

The practice of conservation developed out of a greater understanding of the fragility of cultural objects, particularly those created from organic material. Conservators conform to, and abide by, these values when devising their interventions. This approach has been described as ‘a philosophy of interventions’, the intention of which is the proper, long-term care of cultural material. This cultural material embraces an array of precious objects from oil paintings to musical instruments from stamps to sculpture (Pye and Sully, 2007; Sloggett, 2009).

These values are culturally based, reflecting the general attitude held by society as to the material itself. Society decides what objects are collectable and why they should be collected. Central to the decision to make something collectable is the inherent understanding that it will be cared for appropriately, so that it can continue to be enjoyed.

Cultural material deemed important within developed nations is primarily held within collecting institutions, such as museums and galleries, furthermore Sloggett (2009) observes that the framework in which the discipline of conservation is based and developed is framed by the practice protocols and knowledge of these collecting institutions (Sloggett, 2009, Applebaum, 2007).

As a practice, conservation involves the understanding of materials and technology, and the art-creation process, as well as the historical and social significance of the works being treated. It involves an understanding of the rates of decay within objects and the factors that influence such decay. The first duty of conservators is to slow down the rate of decay present within objects (Richmond, 2007). They do this by either intervening physically or chemically to treat the object, or by manipulating the environment to which the object is exposed. Conservation practice has, at its core, the preservation, protection, care, and restoration of our cultural heritage (Pye and Sully, 2007). It is the responsibility of a conservator to intervene to limit this change and safely preserve the fineness of the object where, and for as long as, possible (Caple, 2000; ICON, 2009).

Conservation appeared as a distinct discipline within the museum sector in the late 1960s. It evolved as a practice from within the range of museum activities prevalent at this time. However, its origins and development can be traced back many centuries. Once the object was regarded for its cultural value, someone became responsible for its care. Conservators treat cultural material of all types, from watercolours to sculpture, tapestries and ethnographic objects.

Conservation became the main philosophy of intervention within the museum and gallery sector, and with the public, and has become an essential element therein. Museums exist to assemble and educate about collections, and the management and preservation of these collections is paramount to their activities. Most museums have the care of their collections as a key objective, placing conservation at the heart of the modern museum's operation. As a result, a greater understanding of how conservation has changed will have value for policymakers in the museum sector (Ward, 1986; Keene, 1996). Understanding

the functions museums perform provides us with a greater insight into their purpose and their relationship with the practice of conservation.

Museums have four classic functions: to collect, to preserve, to conduct research, and to interpret their collections. Preservation is central to these functions as without it, research and interpretation are impossible and collecting pointless. But it is simply not enough to preserve cultural material as this would be detrimental to the multitude of messages an object can convey.

However, conservation is not exclusive to museums. In some countries, for example, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France, there are numerous self-employed specialist conservators who work on a contract basis for museums, collectors and the general public alike (Appleton, 1998).

There is a dependent relationship between conservation and the institutions in which it is practised. Conservation must be congruent with the strategic aims of museums, universities and art galleries. Otherwise, conflict will arise. Preservation of the collection is a core objective of practically all museums, and, as such, it is central to their effective operation. There are some instances in which conservators may be precluded from conserving particular artworks or collections. Some artists may preclude conservation intervention from their work, particularly those who integrate the decaying process into the work itself. Tony O'Malley, a contemporary Irish artist, has created leaf pictures from painting thin pieces of paper and shaping them with veins to resemble leaves. He has expressly said that he does not want any conservation work to take place on these works. He simply wants them to decay like leaves.

Works of art are categorised in terms of the media, support or technique from which they are created. Conservators then specialise in the conservation of works of art within these categories. The term 'painting' is used to describe the application of oil paint to either canvas or a wooden panel. A watercolour is created by applying watercolour to paper,

whereas a tapestry is usually a textile image fashioned by weaving wool. Each category demands an understanding of the materials involved and the actual creation process that goes into making the work of art.

Conservators become categorised in terms of their expertise, namely oil-painting, sculpture or paper conservators. Some specialise in the treatment of works of art on paper, while others focus on ceramics, glass or ethnographic objects. Although the knowledge base in each instance is often different, the guiding principles for a conservation intervention or treatment are universal, remaining the same, no matter what the specialism.

## **1.2 Paper Conservation**

Paper conservation is part of the discipline of the conservation of objects that specialises in the treatment of paper-based cultural material. This includes categories of objects such as watercolours, drawings, fine-art prints, maps, books, manuscripts, ephemeral paper sculpture, and archival material, to name but a selection. Paper has been used extensively as a support because it is relatively inexpensive, available, durable and flexible in nature, and this medium forms a large part of many cultural collections. Paper-based objects can range in size, from small postage stamps to large images created on multiple strips of wide paper. They can comprise individual works that are cherished for their beauty, cultural significance or monetary value, or they can be part of a collection of works that require a different approach.

The practice of paper conservation can be subdivided further into three specialisms, namely, the conservation of flat paper, books and archival material. The conservation of flat paper includes works of art created on individual sheets of paper. Traditionally, media such as watercolours, graphite, gouache, pastels and crayon, to name but a few, have been used by artists to create works of art on paper, or indeed any combination of two or more of the aforementioned. These are one-off creations that may have an artistic or aesthetic appeal.

Books are bound collections of generally printed paper held between covers, made from a variety of combined materials. A book's structure and the materials used to create it are unique to that volume and very time specific. Keeping them in good condition, and correcting any inherent or accidental damage, requires a set of skills that combines an understanding of paper ageing alongside that of binding methods and practices. Hence, books developed as a subset of paper conservation, but they are a distinct practice in their own right (Prajapati, (2005) .

Archival conservators are responsible for the care and treatment of large collections of paper-based documents and manuscripts. The focus of much of their work is less on the individual treatment of works, and more on the overall management of large collections of paper-based material, and archival conservators' skill sets have been honed to address this demand. They more commonly make decisions about the care of thousands of individual pieces of manuscript than sit at a bench and treat ten such works, and, as such, archival conservators have developed the skills needed to do just that.

Another area for which paper conservators tend to be responsible is that of objects created on parchment. As a support material, parchment predates paper, and it was commonly used as a material in books prior to paper being invented. It is a durable material, and very resistant to surface-damage abrasions and creasing. It is extremely susceptible to liner change as a result of being exposed to fluctuation in humidity. In the past, it was used in the manufacture of books as a support for legal documents, a support for the creation of artworks, and in the manufacture of religious tracts and sacred objects. It continued to be a support for key legal tracts beyond the introduction of paper, and it is a material commonly encountered by book conservators treating books that pre-date the eighteenth century. Parchment is a very different material to paper, but it has become paper conservators' responsibility because of its history and the lack of any specialists in the area who deal specifically with this material.

Many factors can impact on the well-being of a paper-based cultural object or collections of same. The object can be damaged by its function when created. For example, maps are a type of paper-based material that can experience excessive handling during their period of use, and this can be accentuated over time. How a paper-based cultural object has been handled, stored or framed since its creation can cause deterioration from within the support and media. Much of the work of a paper conservator involves correcting previous framing methods to facilitate access to the objects so that they can be treated. Poor storage conditions, such as dampness, high humidity, and insect and rodent infestation, and poor control of humidity, light and temperature can do significant damage to paper-based collections. All of these factors impact on the fineness of the object. It is the function of the paper conservator to safely return as much of this as is possible.

Paper conservation, as a discipline, began to organise in the mid-1970s. Its history is intertwined with the previous ways in which paper-based items were treated, but also with the history and development of the support and media involved in the creation of paper-based cultural objects.

### **1.3 The Focus of this Research**

The focus of this study is the practice of conservation, with emphasis on the development of paper conservation (a subdivision of overall conservation practice within the United Kingdom) from 1970 to 2005. This period was chosen because it encompasses the time span over which paper conservation emerged and established itself as a separate practice within museums and beyond.

Museums are an important part of cultural life and conservation plays a key role in their operation. There are approximately 2,500 museums within the United Kingdom that all house different, distinctive collections (Museums Association, 2009). In 2008, the visitor numbers for the top six London attractions were in excess of 23 million (Meikle, 2009), while the British Library has calculated that every £1 invested by the state within that



institution produces in excess of £4 in economic value to the economy (British Library, 2009).

Conservation practice can be segmented into the treatment of moveable or immovable objects. Included within the immovable category are architectural objects, buildings, some sculptural pieces, and natural/environmental objects. The moveable-objects category includes cultural objects that can be moved, including the myriad of culturally based collections held throughout the country (Plenderleith, 1999; Caple, 2002). Paper conservation is a sector of conservation that specialises in the treatment of paper-based, moveable objects.

Conservation is one of the newest practices within the museum sector. It has been noticed, however, that conservation in the last decade of the twentieth century has undergone ‘dramatic change’ (Szmelter, 2000). Von Imhoff (2009) noted that the different natural sciences, chemistry, biology and physics had a greater impact on the field of conservation which have led to ‘incredible developments’ therein. Lester (2002) pointed out that the environment in which conservation operates is somewhat volatile. He reviewed the constraints under which it laboured and concluded that it was important that an open dialogue about how the practice should develop over the next few years be considered. In particular, he noted, it has to evolve in a way that is appropriate to its particular context and operating environment. All of these commentators are describing an active profession facing a degree of change.

Paper conservation is an occupation carried out in many countries. When the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC) organised its first joint conference with the Society of Archivists, it noted that attendees (many of the representative groups of specialist practice) were boundary-free. Over half its members came from abroad in the lead-up to the conference, later merging at the same time with other bodies to form the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1946. The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) was an internationally based organisation that, although registered in London after the Second World War, was transglobal in nature. However, in order to make the aims of this present project achievable, a limit had to be placed on the

scope of the research, and a national boundary was decided upon. This study is, therefore, restricted to the United Kingdom.

The main audience for this study is made up of conservators and, in a wider context, the museum sector, including managers and curators. Conservation has at its disposal finite resources, and it is incumbent upon the practice to deploy those resources to gain the maximum possible return for collections for which conservators are responsible. Efficient, effective deployment of scarce resources is central to caring properly for collections. Clearly, it is hoped that conservation policymakers of the future will find this research useful.

Conservation, as it emerged, did so along lines of practice linked to the type of material being treated – archaeological objects, paper and oil paintings, to name but three. As it has matured, the change it has undergone can be analysed. The focus within conservation has developed from one that concentrated on the treatment of individual objects to the impact of measures introduced on collections as a whole. Over the past thirty years, it has gained a cohesiveness that was missing in the early days of the practice. This cohesiveness needs to be analysed in order to determine the nature of the profession.

## **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

Conservation in the twenty-first century is a dynamic, multidisciplinary practice in which conservators not only have in-depth knowledge of their own areas of specialisation, but also of other areas, such as science, the properties of materials, construction techniques, the environment, art history, and changing fashions and lifestyles.

It is the development of conservation from its origins to this point that is at the core of this research – how it has changed over the time frame, and how effective this change has been. Having emerged and established itself as a credible discipline, it is timely that its development over the thirty-year development from 1995 to 2005 be evaluated. Such an

assessment would be of value to those planning the future direction of conservation. As Andrew Oddy, Keeper of Conservation with the British Museum from 1985 until 2002 said, 'To know where we are going in conservation, we have to know where we have come from' (Oddy 2001, p11).

The aims and objectives of this research have been determined out of careful consideration of the benefits that such an inquiry would have for conservation, both today and in the future, in an effort to encapsulate the dynamic for change and improvement that is present within the practice. Accordingly, this ambition has been quantified into the following three aims and objectives.

**To explore and define the conservation industry**

Conservation has been emerging as an occupation for the past fifty years and has reached a stage of maturity where its collective identity can and should be examined. Its development has been reflected in part by certain subdivisions of the practice organising themselves into representative bodies and cooperating to improve the manner in which they work (Davis, 1998). The nature of the overall activity of conservation should be determined.

**To determine the issues that caused change within conservation, with particular emphasis on one segment, namely, paper conservation**

Paper conservation is a good subdivision of the overall practice of conservation, in that its origins date back to the start of the 1970s. It provides an important segment of conservation by which the impact of the drivers for change can be assessed.

**To propose a change model that will reflect how conservation changes**

This could become a valuable tool by which future plans for conservation could be evaluated. Interventions could be assessed using this model at a planning stage, and greater insight into their potential effectiveness could be gained.

The objectives of this research project are as follows.

**To identify and analyse the changes that have taken place within the structures of paper conservation during the years 1975 to 2005**

The changes that have taken place within the structures are twofold: there has been a greater move towards a professional trait model within the structure of conservation, while simultaneously the practice of conservation has come under increased pressure.

**To ascertain issues that led to these changes**

By identifying the issues that led to these changes, one can begin to determine some of the reasons for the changes and begin to identify the essence of why paper conservation changes in the manner in which it does.

**To assess the implications of the changes that have taken place in the structures of paper conservation, for conservation as a whole**

Analysing the changes in relation to one sector enables us to evaluate change within the context of a larger working group within conservation. Paper conservation is one area of practice within conservation, but it is representative of many of the other sectors therein.

Most studies of change within conservation have concentrated on an analysis of how individual aspects of the practice have changed. These are generally descriptive and recall the development within individual sectors as history (Fairbrass and Rickman, 2001; Cohen, 2005). In addition, there is a body of research that gives an overview of the discipline of conservation, its areas of interest, and what conservators do. These publications concentrate on raising public awareness about conservation, to garner greater recognition for conservation within the museum sector itself (Ward, 1986; Richmond, 2007).

Different elements have impacted on conservation causing greater change to occur. The natural sciences physics, chemistry and biology to name but three have been having a direct influence on how conservation developed, and the relationship between them has been detailed by commentators (Von Imhoff, 2009). Some have attempted to outline the changes in theory and the effect that this has had on both the practice and the changing attitudes to collections (Child, 1992; Muñoz Viñas, 2005). Others have addressed the professionalisation of conservation and the very many functions that comprise a profession. Keene's (1996) research into the greater effective management of conservation is an excellent example of a topic that relates to the emergence of conservation as a discipline. Understanding the impact that these changes have had on conservation is very worthwhile.

Finally, the museum sector itself, which was once quite static, has emerged as a dynamic cultural arena that has experienced rapid changes in the recent past. Museums fulfil a variety of roles, from tourist attraction to a resource for social services, and they have been the subject of a variety of investigations. The British Library values its economic contribution at £363 million – four times its public subscription – and it is only one institution of many in London and throughout the United Kingdom (British Library, 2009).

Although valuable, these studies have concentrated on individual aspects of conservation. There is little if any analysis of the collective outcome of these changes and the effect of them on the direction of conservation – in short, its strategic direction. Federspiel advises that it is the responsibility of conservation to continuously reflect on the 'means and ends of conservation'. He maintains that it is a question of values, and that the values espoused by conservation must be an understanding of continual change, but this cannot be continuous change for the sake of change. It must be focused, if it is to be effective (Federspiel, 2001, Applebaum, 2007).

There has been little research undertaken into the role played by conservation in the development of museums. This is evidenced by the enquiry this author made to the

Chancery Library, which specialises in conservation and is operated by the Institute of Conservation, concerning the availability of research, articles or publications that address the role of conservation in museums. This request proved fruitless. There has been no serious investigation of the effects of the collective aspects of changes in conservation. Where there is research, it tends to be insignificant and brief in nature.

## **1.5 Research Design and Methodology**

Conservation has had a direct relationship with science as it has emerged. Indeed, science provided conservation with two key elements: firstly, information about the materials from which objects were created, and, secondly, a template that conservation could develop. The influence of science forced conservation into concentrating on the part of an object's condition that could be observed and measured (Coremans, 1996). From a positivist view of the world, science was seen as the way to get at truth, to understand the world well enough so that we might predict and control it. This was a core tenet of conservation practice until quite recently, when a more 'common-sense' approach began to be adopted leading to a breakdown of the positivist view.

Availing of the advice of Lofland and Lofland (1995, P3), to 'start where you are and to use your current situation or past involvement as a topic of research', the author of this thesis, who has been a practising conservator for over twenty-five years, has chosen conservation as his topic of research. While undertaking a degree in business studies, he developed an interest in change management and strategy, and both of these experiences are being drawn upon for this study.

Much of the initial work on this project concentrated on defining the scope of the research. Conservation and restoration take place in some form in every country around the world. The materials used are geographically and culturally specific. Cultural objects can range in size from tiny miniature portrait paintings to large buildings many hundreds of years old, from postage stamps to cultural phenomena like Stonehenge. From this wide canvas the

scope of this project was decided upon. A review of the literature relating to conservation was undertaken, and this identified a number of drivers for change, which will subsequently be discussed. Initial interviews with experts in the field further defined the research questions. The proposed research methodology will adopt a qualitative approach and the use of case studies.

## **1.6 The History of Conservation**

Most publications investigating the development of an aspect of conservation begin by outlining the history of conservation and in particular with the contribution made by Germany, where, in 1898, Dr Rathgen collected and published recipes from various sources in *Die Konservierung von Altertumsfunden (The Preservation of Antiquities: A Handbook for Curators)*. His work was translated into English in 1905 and regarded by Harold Plenderleith as being the first true book published on conservation, and one that he found very useful when he entered conservation in the mid-1920s. Rathgen was one of the first practitioners to understand that a rigorous scientific approach was needed when it came to treatments and understanding the materials being treated (Plenderleith, 1999; Caple, 2000; Clavir, 2002).

Plenderleith, in his work on the conservation of antiquities, *The Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art* (1957), detailed scientific procedures that could be applied to damaged objects to correct and repair them. Caple describes this book as one of the greatest influences on the development of conservation during this period, which is reflected by the fact that it was translated into over a dozen foreign languages (Caple, 2000). A later publication that had a huge influence on attitudes to preventative conservation in the 1970s was *The Museum Environment* (1978) by Gary Thompson, which dealt with the key aspects of the environment affecting artefacts (Caple, 2000).

The development of conservation can be assessed through the publication of key texts dealing with aspects of the practice. For example, when Nathan Stolow first published

*Conservation and Exhibitions: Packing, Transport, Storage, and Environmental Considerations*, in 1988, exhibitions had become an integral part of the operation of museums and galleries and had growing in both stature, size and importance. They became an area in which conservators were becoming increasingly more involved. Stolow's publication encapsulated all the relevant information that a conservator working in this area needed, reflecting the emergence of an aspect of museum activity in which conservation's input was vital. Similar publications by Ashley-Smith (2011), Applebaum (2007) and Cassar (1995) assess the risk objects face, conservation methodology and aspects of the museum environment respectively. Other publications such as the readings in conservation series published by the Getty Conservation Institute provide an overview of changes historical perspective within different aspects of conservation practice such as 'Preventative Conservation' (Kneel, 1994), 'Changing Views on Textile Conservation' (Brooks and Eastop, 2011) or Historical Perspectives in the Conservation of Works of Art on Paper (Ellis 2014) to name but three.

There is one main difficulty in trying to outline the development of conservation from its restoration origins, and that is the level of secrecy associated with the practice of restoration. Restorers depended on their abilities, skills, recipes and techniques, which were kept secret to protect the ways in which an individual could earn his living. Such protection was essential and, generally, skills were only passed on to the practitioner's apprentice, who trained with the restorer (Rod, 1996). This secrecy was a barrier to defining the history and development of conservation over time.

Two examples illustrate this code of secrecy very well. The Schweidler brothers, Max and Carl, were renowned paper restorers who practised in Berlin during the 1920s and 1930s. They were admired for their ability to repair tears in an invisible manner and to remove practically any blemish from a work on paper. However, in time, their interventions – in many cases, designed to deceive – were seen as being too dramatic. It gave rise to the term 'a Schweidlerised print', which described a print that had been dramatically altered and restored, and one that had deceived a buyer into purchasing it, thinking it complete. In 1938, Max Schweidler first published *Die Instandsetzung von Kupferstichen, Zeichnungen, Büchern usw*, which detailed the techniques that the brothers used to achieve



their results. The brothers fell out after its publication, and the rift continued for the rest of their lives. Their dispute arose in part because trade secrets had been made public, and in part because Carl, who was perceived as the more skilful of the two, regarded what was written by his brother as being inaccurate (Perkins, 2006; Eeles, 2007).

Another appropriate example of this code of secrecy is a dispute that developed between a conservator and the director of the National Gallery of Norway between 1917 and 1921. Harald Brun was appointed conservator to the collection in 1905, after studying conservation as an apprentice in both Berlin and Copenhagen. In 1908, Jens Thiis was appointed Director of the gallery, and it appears that he and Brun worked well together, without any major problems, until 1917 (Rod, 1996). In that year, Thiis asked the caretaker to clean all the pictures in the gallery. Brun was on holiday at the time, and when he returned a bitter and, at times, farcical disagreement ensued. Ultimately, the dispute revolved around who owned the secrets of the trade, with Brun claiming that he had the right to keep his treatment methods and formula secret. He claimed that he had, in fact, taken an oath to this effect when he began his training, and he was not prepared to break it. Thiis was willing to give up his position as Director if he could not have complete control over conservation within his institution. In the end, Brun was dismissed from his duties in 1921 (ibid.).

As a result of this level of secrecy, most histories of conservation concentrate on structural developments that occurred in museums and governing bodies, facilitating the attitudinal change that resulted in the acceptance of conservation over restoration. Plenderleith's *The Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art: treatment repair and restoration* first published in 1957 is one such publication. The significance of this publication is reflected in the experience of Plenderleith himself and the broad experience of conservation he had at a time when it was emerging. One key remark therein reflects the growing concern around restoration practice: 'Any self-styled restorer could establish himself in his private studio, experimenting as he liked, repainting where necessary (and often where quite unnecessary), and this was a great source of worry to responsible authorities' (Plenderleith 1957, 1999).

Indeed, during the 1920s and 1930s, there was considerable concern about the secrecy attached to treatment methods, and the fact that practitioners held no formal qualifications.

Plenderleith's comments encompass a growing attitude to restoration in which 'responsible authorities' were searching for a new and better way of dealing with art collections. It resulted in both national and international reaction. The International Museums Office of the League of Nations organised a conference, held in Rome in 1930, and its findings were printed in the *Manual of Conservation and Restoration of Paintings*. One of the earliest of its kind, this publication marks a shift away from the traditional approach to treating art, to a more accountable, open and transparent one (Plenderleith, 1999; Clavir, 2002).

Three key events, however, were central to providing the United Kingdom with a critical advantage in the field of conservation. The first was the understanding, at a very early stage in the development of conservation, of the advantages that science could offer and the harnessing of scientific practices to achieve a greater understanding of materials. Because of the problems it faced with its collection after the First World War, the British Museum was one of the first institutions to use scientific methods to gain a greater understanding of materials and potential treatments for objects (Plenderleith, 1999). Secondly, after the cessation of World War II, English became the accepted language of conservation. Finally, the establishment of the International Institute for Conservation of Museum Objects in London in 1950 (it acquired its present title, the IIC, in 1959) centred the emerging discipline in the United Kingdom (Plenderleith, 1999; Clavir, 2002).

The origins of modern conservation within the United Kingdom can be traced back to the problems that developed with the storage of artefacts from the British Museum during the First World War. For its protection, a large amount of the collection of the British Museum was stored in the London Underground system. This environment was unsuitable, being both damp and overheated. After hostilities ended and the materials were

examined, they were found to have been affected by mildew and mould. In the words of Plenderleith (1999), although there were many well-qualified conservators within the museum, the ‘trustees found themselves confronted by an emergency of vast proportions, far beyond their power and experience’.

To address this situation, in 1919 they approached Dr Alexander Scott, Fellow of the Royal Society, who was invited to undertake an investigative report, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of an emergency laboratory to address the damage within the collection. The importance of this development cannot be overstated. Science and scientific analysis would eventually become a central part of conservation understanding and treatment. Being one of the first to harness science provided the British Museum with a critical advantage within the field (Plenderleith, 1999; Clavir, 2002).

The next major development saw Edward Forbes establish a research department, in 1925, in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University. The museum, run by George Stout and John Gettens, housed this research facility to investigate painting materials, their composition and their conservation. In 1932, findings began to be published in the periodical *Technical Studies in the Field of Fine Art*, which was uninterrupted until the outbreak of World War II. Stout and Gettens both lectured to students, and they were among the first to do so regarding the effects of the environment on works of art. Such effects on an object became central to the care of a work of art, and Stout and Gettens were amongst the first to identify this aspect (Caple, 2000).

By the late 1940s, the new science of museum conservation had advanced rapidly, and there was demand for an international institution. It was first proposed by a team of researchers in the Fogg Art Museum, with the full support of their British colleagues. The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) was incorporated as a limited company in 1950 (under the title the International Institute for Conservation of Museum Objects) in the United Kingdom. Significantly, it was the first international body formed to promote dialogue amongst conservators. It aimed to increase their status by forming a self-elected body. It published abstracts and technical literature

and promoted training. In essence, it was the first step in the formation of the conservation profession (Plenderleith, 1999; Caple, 2000; Clavir, 2002).

The new institute set about publishing its own periodical, *Studies in Conservation*, which first appeared in 1952. In time, its membership grew until there were regionalised representative bodies, and these developed into fully fledged regional representative groupings.

Problems that developed with artefacts stored in the London Underground by the British Museum during the First World War also informed a greater understanding of the effect the environment had on objects. Research had already taken place prior to this, into the effects of the environment on museums' collections (Clavir, 2002).

This growing awareness was the beginning of preventative conservation. By the late 1980s, it had grown to encompass three distinct areas: the provision of customised environments for the storage and display of artefacts; the management of collections as whole, complete units; and, finally, the monitoring and control of aspects of the environment – in particular, light, temperature and humidity – to ensure ideal conditions for the storage and display of objects.

### **1.6.1 Restoration Versus Conservation**

The history of conservation can be viewed as a movement from the dominance of restoration to the acceptance of conservation as the most logical and acceptable means of treating cultural objects. Early manuals relating to the practice of restoration date back to the early eighteenth century, but it has been practised for as long as objects have been created. Since the middle of the twentieth century, there has been an ongoing debate about the merits of both conservation and restoration. By contrasting the two in table form, the differences between both are highlighted.

**Table 1.6.1: Comparisons between Conservation and Restoration**

<b>Conservation</b>	<b>Restoration</b>
Profession dedicated to the preservation of antiquities for the future	Practice dedicated to the cleaning, repair and reconstruction of antiquities
Primarily involves identifying causes of deterioration and preventing further deterioration	Primarily involves removing residue from the surface of works of art
Generally, academic training to degree or MSc level, with emphasis on art history, science and artistic aspects	Apprenticeship training with emphasis on artistic techniques and knowledge gained through trial and error
Follows a policy of minimum intervention; uses materials and techniques that are reversible	Aims to return the object to the way it looked when it was first created
Aims to preserve the history of the piece	Can compromise the history of the piece

Source: Owens, 2009

Table 1.6.1 highlights the key differences between conservation and restoration. Clearly, the emphasis of restoration interventions is on improving the appearance of works of art, whereas conservation emphasises its preservation and stabilisation. Viewed in this way, it is easy to see both as separate, distinct disciplines. In the past, the market demanded that all damage be restored or hidden. The aim of restorers was to return the damaged object back to the way it appeared when it was originally created. Dealers, collectors and institutions alike all accepted this as the norm (Muñoz Viñas, 2005; Owens, 2009). However, with a greater understanding of works of art came a greater understanding of the merits of the interventions used to treat them.

Sometimes a conservator has to improve the appearance of a damaged object. He might have to intervene to restore it. Equally, a restorer might have to work on an object to preserve it. So, in practice, the lines of each discipline, conservation and restoration blur. Furthermore, confusion between both approaches has occurred because there is no separate word for conservation in many European languages, and in all European documents relating to conservation, the term ‘conservator-restorer’ is used (Lester, 2002).

Restoration dominated as an approach, but this was eventually questioned, and new values were adopted. There was an increased desire for restorers to be accountable, for them to be more open and share their processes. Equally, there was a greater demand for accountability by managers of cultural collections. Training schemes became available in colleges from the late 1960s onwards, and museums and galleries began to employ restorers and conservators. A debate began about the merits of both conservation and restoration, with conservation eventually succeeding (Keene, 1996).

### **1.6.2 The Classical Theory of Conservation**

Conservation theory is a set of overall guiding principles that govern how conservators can intervene. The classical theory of conservation was the predominant theory, certainly in the initial period under review, and it provided values around which a set of rules governing the interventions to conserve objects was devised. The classical theory of conservation revolves around one key premise: that an object can, as a result of an intervention, be returned to the way it was when it was created. This concept has been described as ‘truth enforcement’ and it aims to reveal the true nature or integrity of the object being treated. This objective was central to the practice of conservation and restoration up until the late 1980s, when the practice began to be questioned (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

The roots of this classical theory can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century, regarding the repair and restoration of buildings. For many reasons, building restoration seems to be the arena in which conservation theory was determined and defined, and this went on to influence all aspects of the conservation of moveable objects. Classical conservation theory emerged from a debate between architects and commentators involved in the restoration of buildings, and which went on to have an influence on archaeological conservation and the conservation of works of art.

There are various reasons why architectural conservation took the lead ahead of other aspects of conservation. Architects were probably the first creatives to receive academic training. They also had considerable social standing. Architecture was one of the major arts with a long tradition of practice and, consequently, it created a large body of knowledge around, and much debate about, practice.

Building conservation involves many people with architectural direction by the very nature of the intervention. Buildings differ from other forms of cultural objects because they are more visible and socially relevant than other objects, such as easel paintings or prints. The cost of building conservation, in most cases, tends to be greater than other conservation interventions. Buildings are experienced by users in a different way to other objects. Building conservation is subject to the norms of architecture, which regulates technical specifications, safety and access. Finally, buildings are static, immovable cultural objects, whereas most other cultural objects are moveable. For all these reasons, the development of architecture has had a direct bearing on the theory of conservation (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

The beginning of this theory of conservation can be traced back to John Ruskin's publication, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), which was followed by *The Stones of Venice*, (1951) in which he outlined his opinions on the values and virtues of buildings. Ruskin passionately believed that nothing should disturb the original remnants from the past, especially if those buildings were Gothic buildings. It is somewhat ironic that Ruskin's beliefs are accepted by conservators, as he held that one of the greatest risks was from people trying to rebuild damaged buildings. He opposed any kind of restoration, accepting that decay was an added value (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

In France, many splendid Gothic buildings have survived. Their reconstruction was considered to be in the national interest. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc was the architect who was charged with some of France's most important Gothic restoration projects. He had an opposing view to Ruskin. He was equally as enthusiastic about Gothic architecture, but believed that it should be presented in a pristine condition. Viollet-le-Duc believed that, as

an architect, he had the right to replace damaged parts of buildings, so long as the intervention was true to the nature of the building itself. He himself oversaw the construction of an additional two towers to Notre Dame Cathedral (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

The writings and beliefs of both commentators provide us with the extremes of a debate about the objective of conservation interventions. In the case of Ruskin, it is paradoxical that his views have become iconic for conservators because he believed that restoration was a lie. However, they represent a continuum from the most restrictive to the most permissive. Commentators who had contributions to make to the debate from this period onwards were always judged as being between the two extremes of Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc.

It was almost impossible to reconcile the two differing views of both Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc, but Camillo Boito, an Italian architect, tried to define a middle ground, with some success. He put forward the idea of a monument being a document, and that one had to be faithful to this by not adding to or taking from it.

This reconciliation of ideas was presented at the third Conference of Architects and Civil Engineers of Rome in 1883. Boito compiled his thoughts in a document entitled *Primera Carta del Restauro*, or *The Charter of Restoration*. This outlined eight principles, some of which still have relevance today. One of these principles, namely that new additions or restored parts should be discernible from original parts, is still widely accepted as a basic tenet of conservation. Boito suggested that buildings be photographed and documented as part of the restoration process. He also recommended that material removed from the building be retained and possibly displayed elsewhere (Muñoz Viñas, 2005; Clavir 2002).

The difference between the positions of Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc and Boito is that they disagree as to where truth, integrity and/or authenticity lie within an object to be conserved. Where there is loss from an object, Ruskin's approach would be to do nothing, leave it unrepaired, and accept it as part of the beauty and history of the object. Viollet-le-



Duc's approach would be to replace the missing areas and countenance additions beyond the original in order to restore the integrity of the work. Boito, on the other hand, would replace the missing areas, but in a way and with materials that would enable the additions to be discerned upon close examination.

### **1.6.3 Collections and Conservation**

The development of conservation is also mirrored in the development and history of collections. Caple observes that one of the earliest examples of collecting is represented by the occurrence of fossils in Palaeolithic graves. He also refers that Egyptian Pharaohs collected rare and unusual objects. But the first collections that mirror our modern notions of museums can be traced back to the collections organised by the Greeks in 490 BC, in the Temple of Delphi, to celebrate the victory of the Athenians at Marathon. This collection differs from others in that there is evidence of it having been listed and conserved (Caple, 2000).

Since then, many other collections have developed alongside powerful individuals or organisations within society. Julius Caesar, various Chinese emperors, and Henry III are examples of powerful rulers who developed vast collections of special objects. Examples of powerful bodies within society that have amassed collections include all the traditional religions of the world, the Catholic Church being the best example amongst them (Caple, 2000).

Conservation history can also be viewed through the development of museums. Many museums were established within Britain in the nineteenth century, for the purpose of public enlightenment. Many had free admission and displayed objects and art in an effort to enable the public to acquire good taste. The collecting policies of many of these newly emerging museums saw them gather vast amounts of archaeological material that was inherently unstable. Coping and caring for this amount of material placed the skills of the restorer under considerable pressure (Clavir, 2002).

By the time the Institute of Archaeology was established in 1936 by Dr Mortimer Wheeler, there was a much greater understanding of the problems faced by collectors of archaeological material and its inherent instability. With a renewed interest in archaeology in the nineteenth century, many artefacts had been added to collections. Once excavated, however, many objects were found to be inherently unstable. Traditional restoration techniques were unable to cope with the demands of growing collections.

Iona Gedye, a conservator charged with the treatment of excavated objects during this period, commented, 'Armed with Dr. Harold Plenderleith's first small book on the Conservation of Antiquities and a few basic chemicals, [we] started a 'hit or miss' attack on the remaining finds' (Clavir, 2002). The Institute of Archaeology quickly established a training course to improve the treatment of materials. It became the first accredited course for conservators within the United Kingdom (ibid.).

The history of museums and conservation are intertwined, each influencing the other. There are numerous examples of this relationship throughout the histories of both. Clavir (2002) quotes Charles Trick Currelly, the first curator of Canada's Royal Ontario Museum, who had purchased for his collection numerous iron objects from the Roman period, which were highly unstable and susceptible to rust. He researched a treatment method developed by German restorers, which stabilised the iron and, thus, his collection and investment. Alongside this, Clavir mentions the work of Stout and Gettens, the aforementioned pioneering conservators who worked in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University. A curator of Asiatic art from this museum had discovered Chinese cave paintings that were particularly fine and, with an associate, tried unsuccessfully to remove them. Stout and Gettens began to research the problem, to see how conservation could be safely achieved. Both of these examples illustrate the use of scientific research as part of the investigation process into solving particularly difficult or challenging conservation problems.

Up until the 1970s, there was little change in the emphasis of museums as places of enlightenment, but from this period onwards, there has been considerable change within museums, and this forms the focus of the next section.

At the start of this review of conservation, in 1971 there were approximately 115 people employed as conservators in the public sector within the United Kingdom, with no record of any conservator working on contract. By 1998, however, there were 1,021 conservators employed in the public service and 1,992 operating on a contract basis, giving a total number of 3,013 working conservators (Winsor, 1998). The description of the work carried out was divided into three main categories: those who worked directly on objects, those who worked within a collection's management role, and a group described as 'others', who were generally educators or technicians working in a supporting role within the field of conservation. This is a noticeable development on the earliest survey of conservators, made in the early 1970s, when the only role noted was 'bench conservator' (Winsor, 1998).

#### **1.6.4 Science**

As previously mentioned, conservation's involvement with science gained momentum in the second half of the twentieth century. Prior to this, scientific involvement was of a 'soft' nature, and from the middle of the twentieth century, a 'hard' scientific approach was adopted. It reinforces classical theory because scientific conservation revolves around objects and facts, not ideas. It reinforces the notion of truth, and that the object can be returned to its previous form. Impartial scientific analysis allowed for the accurate identification of materials used to create objects, initially reinforcing the notion that the true nature of an object can be identified (Horie 1987).

Conservation has been very successful in incorporating the history and philosophy of science into its own professional practice and discipline. A scientific approach provided conservation with the objectivity needed to validate the cultural relativity that is central to

the treatment of such material. By adopting the methodologies of science, conservation acquired a validity to its approach. Science had clearly developed and defined protocols in relation to knowledge creation and recording. Finally, scientific principles provided conservation with a way to verify and reproduce interventions (Sloggett, 2009).

In time, the ongoing relationship between conservation and science fostered the knowledge that an object could not be returned to its original state (Carver, 2002). Science provides conservation with its objectivity. Because the information collected about objects is done so in a controlled, verifiable way, it is considered superior to subjective knowledge. It is not contaminated by individual opinion, and it has a universal validity. The knowledge gained is devoid of personal biases, preferences or beliefs (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

Science had a greater influence than just problem-solving. It also influenced the fledgling profession as it emerged, impacting greatly on the operation of conservation at a fundamental level. Scientific methodology, namely the investigation of source, analysis, interpretation and synthesis, was integrated into conservation practice. It led to a greater analysis and understanding of the materials at the core of objects and, at the same time, a greater knowledge of the decay process to which each is subject (Ellis 1995; Clavir, 1998).

On a pragmatic level, scientific conservation is seen as the best form of conservation because it produces results that are perceived as being superior to those of non-scientific conservation. ‘The results are more reversible, more efficient, longer lasting, truer, more objective and less controversial. Science has developed a number of complex, valuable methods, techniques and tools, and their use has led conservation to a new level (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

These assumptions underline the objectivity that science brings to conservation. Muñoz Viñas believes that scientific conservation is guided by an unspoken materials theory of conservation, which, in turn, is based on the need to preserve the object’s material truth.

This is classical conservation theory, reflecting the notion that was common in the early part of the twentieth century, which, thanks to the intervention of science and the conservator, the object could be returned to the way it was when first created. Science deals with materials, not ideas and, as such, claims to be able to determine the original state of an object.

Equally, for a treatment to be acceptable, it must conform to scientific principles and methods, specifically those emanating from the 'hard' sciences. A rigorous logical and systematic method of observation, experimentation, validation and prediction is central to the scientific approach. Scientific procedures promised relief from the confusion and criticism caused by the use of idiosyncratic and arbitrary procedures (Dykstra, 1996).

As scientific analysis developed, it had the advantage of providing conservators with a greater understanding of what happens to an object when it is being conserved. This, in turn, has informed practice. Coremans highlights how particular developments within science have impacted on conservation, acknowledging that, in 1870, Max Joseph Pettenkofer introduced the use of microscopes for specialised visual examination. In 1905, Wilhelm Ostwald used the resources of microchemistry. In 1914, Dr A. Faber demonstrated the usefulness of radiography, while Harald Kougel was demonstrating the resources of ultraviolet and fluorescence. After the First World War, X-rays were emerging as a tool for investigation, and they were to become a very valuable tool in time (Coremans, 1996).

Hackney highlights the point that conservation science is not solely involved with conservation treatments, and that many areas of museum activity have also benefitted. Areas such as storage conditions, pollution control, pest monitoring, handling, packaging and transportation, as well as framing and display, are all day-to-day museum operations that have been influenced by the scientific approach (Hackney, 1997).

The methodology, knowledge and values of science were adopted by conservators at a time when it was revered by the wider public. In the late nineteenth century, there was an optimistic belief in Western societies that science held the key to human progress and a better understanding of the universe (Pearse, 1997). There was great public fascination with science. After the First World War, and for the first time, the British government gave financial support to scientific research, which was considered to be in the public interest.

Science was also one of the motivating factors in the establishment of the IIC in 1950, the purpose of which was to promote greater cooperation between individuals undertaking conservation-science research. This was the first international representative association for conservation, and one of the first steps in the professionalism of the conservation practice.

Prior to the 1960s, conservators looked to science to provide recipes for dealing with deterioration or aesthetic disfigurement. With the establishment of specific training courses in conservation, and the move away from the heretofore master–pupil craftsman-type apprenticeship training, science became more proactive within conservation. The courses provided significant numbers of trained graduates for museums, and there followed a shift towards research. Science became more proactive with the 1980s being described by Roy (1997) as the ‘boom period in which scientists and conservators sought better to understand the mechanisms of deterioration and the technique of manufacture of the objects in their care’.

By the 1990s, the nature of conservation science was questioned, coinciding with a general postmodern re-evaluation of the objectivity of science (Kuhn, 1970; Latour, 2004). Many of those criticising were cognisant of the value that science had for conservation in general. In fact, many who criticised – led by de Guichen, Tennant and Daniels – were conservation scientists themselves. Tennant (1997) says, ‘In the conservation of cultural heritage, the values of scientific investigation [range] from those of critical importance, without which a project cannot be undertaken, to those of tenuous relevance.’ One of the

key criticisms revolved around the ability of scientists and conservators to communicate, and for each to appreciate the other's needs.

Clearly, the relationship between conservators and conservation scientists had reached an impasse. Some conservators believed that scientists were unable to provide a support system for conservators. Others criticised what they saw as the imperialist attitude within science as being a barrier to good working relations. Some scientists, naturally, countered by suggesting that conservators lacked enough understanding to ask the right research questions. Others blamed the language of science as being the barrier to the two areas working together (Carver, 2002).

In a review of the articles printed in *Studies in Conservation* from 1979 to 1989, de Guichen notes that 296 articles written by 292 authors appeared. Of these, 48% dealt with the composition of the object, 17% dealt with the products that might be used, 35% dealt with what might be done to ensure an object's survival, and 1% dealt with treatment evaluation. These figures reflect the activity of conservation scientists over this period. It is vital that the constituents of an artistic object are fully understood before it is treated, but the materials are only one element of the treatment. Scientists' work often ends where it should begin for the conservator. In other words, once identified, how should the materials be treated (de Guichen, 1989).

Muñoz Viñas describes the part of conservation science, that Tennant (ibid) describes as being 'of tenuous relevance', which is addressed to conservation, not conservators, as endoscience, or science about science. It was scientific research undertaken by scientists interested into specific conservation of issues, but which had little reference or application to practicing conservators. The solutions arrived at had only limited application for conservators who were attempting to address the issues they encountered throughout their practice. Further criticism of endoscience outlined that it lacked universal value, and the research was plagued with exceptions. This came about because of a lack of communication between both sectors, an inability on the part of scientists to understand

the complexity of conservation problems, and a lack of technical knowledge on the part of the scientists (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

As the twentieth century drew to a close, comments by Torraca (2002) took on more significance when he advised, ‘Do not underrate the conservator. Scientists are frequently tempted to do so when they see him tinkering with ‘research’ ideas and using very peculiar methods. [...] By feeling the properties with materials with very accurate instruments (his eyes and hands), he cut his way through a multivariable problem more efficiently than the scientist, who is accustomed to proceeding by logical steps and may have trouble identifying which variable is the relevant one.’

These developments in science, as aforementioned, were closely linked to changes that occurred in the role of conservation within museums, and the next section investigates this changing dynamic.

## **1.7 The Development of Conservation**

When something is created, it can be retained or discarded. If it is retained, it is because it has a value, and there will be a desire to maintain the object for as long as possible. Objects can range from the extremely large to the tiny and be constructed from a variety of materials. If, however, the object is made from organic materials, e.g., wood, textiles or paper, it is susceptible to change (Cornfield, 1998). It is the responsibility of a conservator to intervene to limit this change, and to safely preserve the fineness of the object where, and for as long as is possible. How this intervention takes place, as we will see further on, determines whether an object is conserved, preserved or restored.

As a practice, object conservation is relatively new. Its origins can be traced back to the middle of the twentieth century but, as has been outlined in the previous section, it has emerged from the practice of restoration, whose beginnings originated from the sixteenth century and beyond (Conti, 1988). Marijnissen (1996) noted that there was no precise



moment when conservation started or restoration finished. It was a gradual process, happening over time. Not all interventions, he maintained, had as a purpose the return of the objects to their original state. He cites as an example the practice of *Denkmalpflege* (the conservation and protection of monuments), the aim of which was to care for sculpture and monuments, rather than restoring them to their original state. This approach had parallels with the conservation process that emerged in the mid-twentieth century.

Federspiel advises that the professional obligation of conservators continues to change, reflecting the changing values of conservation. These changing values are the history of the practice, and they are reflected in our answers to three questions: why do we preserve our cultural heritage, what do we preserve, and, finally, how do we preserve it? The answers to these three questions reflect the history of the profession (Federspiel, 2001).

Conservators are governed by codes of ethics that promote the long-term preservation of objects for the enjoyment and appreciation of the general public. The codes assist conservators in the choices they make, to promote good practice and define how interventions take place (Richmond, 2007). Consequently, conservators intervene less and in a very different way than they did in the past, and they have been instrumental in changing attitudes in the wider museum community to their way of thinking.

Conservation as an occupation is, in the main, self-regulated. At its core is a set of principles designed to standardise the approach to treating all objects, as noted in Table 1.7, as follows

**Table 1.7: Guidelines for Conservation Interventions**

Treatments should be preceded by a thorough examination of the object.

Treatments should be recorded fully.

A minimum of new material should be added to the object during treatment.

Interventions must respect the integrity of the object.

A conservator must maintain the currency of his technical knowledge.

A conservator must be aware of his own limitations.

.

Source: Ward, 1986

In the treatment of an object, the conservator continuously performs the following: examination, recording, diagnosis, action-recording and care. The monetary value of an object is not important in the context of conservation/preservation, and every object should be afforded the best care (Ward, 1986). These are essentially a set of rules that have emerged over time, governing conservation interventions. They are a set of guidelines that provide a standardisation of approach amongst conservators dealing with the conservation of objects within their own specialisations.

### **1.7.1 Definitions**

The representative bodies of conservation practice and national heritage bodies all have their definitions of conservation. Keene observes that they generally fall into two categories: first, the nature of the work carried out on objects, whether it is conservation or restoration, and, second, the role of conservators or other agents in carrying out this work (Keene, 1996).

Conservation aims to minimise change to cultural material, to protect items from the adverse effects of climate and chemical deterioration, and to safeguard our heritage, not only for ourselves, but for future generations. ICON, the Institute of Conservation, defines the work carried out by conservators as ‘the preservation, protection, care and restoration of our cultural heritage’ (ICON, 2009). According to The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) ‘Conservators are concerned with a number of factors in preserving an object, including determining structural stability, counteracting chemical and physical deterioration, and performing conservation treatment based on an evaluation of the aesthetic, historic, and scientific characteristics of the object’ (AIC, 2009).

The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) defines conservation along similar lines ‘about preventing damage and loss to our cultural heritage. Conservation aims to minimise change to collection material, to protect items from the adverse effects of climate and chemical deterioration, and to safeguard our heritage, not only for ourselves, but for future generations. Conservation activities may include preservation, restoration, examination, documentation, research, advice, treatment, preventive conservation, training and education’ (AICCM, 2009).

Focusing on the nature of the interventions leaves definitions of conservation open to inaccuracy, as the philosophy of intervention changes. Furthermore, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has revised its definition of a museum about every eight to ten years since its establishment in 1946. Given that there is such a close relationship between conservation and museums, any change in the definition of museums has an impact on how we define conservation.

### **1.7.2 The Practice of Conservation**

As we have established, conservators specialise in divisions based on their training and expertise. Table 1.7.2(a) is constructed from data collected by a Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) survey held in 1998, and it illustrates the various specialisms within

conservation, the numbers working in each section, and, finally, the percentage of people employed therein. It also breaks down the numbers working in the public sector into those employed directly by museums and those contracted to provide conservation services. When the percentage values for each are examined, it is evident that the conservation of paper-based materials (as represented by the sections Archives, Art on Paper and Books) amounts to over 29% – the largest single media division. It also illustrates the level of outsourcing that was present in the public sector at the time. Approximately two thirds of conservators working in the public sector were permanent employees. One third of conservators were employed on a contract basis, and this trend seems to be growing (Winsor, 1998).

Each specialism can be subdivided into smaller, more specific subsections thereof. A typical example of this is found in sculpture, the general term used to describe a three-dimensional object created by an artist. However, there are a myriad of materials from which a sculpture can be created. Given this fact, there could be a number of sculpture conservators specialising in metals, while others might choose to conserve plaster casts.

**Table 1.7.2(a): Numbers of Conservators Working in the Public Sector and their Specialisms**

<b>Areas of Expertise</b>	<b>Employed in the Public Sector</b>	<b>Employed in the Private Sector</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Percentage Overall</b>
Archaeological Material	72	25	97	5.80%
Archives	116	85	201	12.03%
Art on Paper	60	89	149	8.92%
Books	104	37	141	8.44%
Ceramics	42	72	114	6.82%
Clocks or Watches	8	58	66	3.95%
Ethnographic Materials	37	24	61	3.65%
Furniture	34	118	152	9.10%
Industrial or Transport	28	14	42	2.51%
Natural History	29	16	45	2.69%
Paintings or Miniatures	41	180	221	13.23%
Photographs	83	30	113	6.76%
Social-History Objects	60	26	86	5.15%
Stone	36	67	104	6.16%
Textiles	39	41	80	4.79%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Winsor, 1998.

We see in Table 1.7.2(a) that paper conservators comprise a significant percentage of conservators working in the field. The categories of Archives, Art on Paper and Books are all material divisions of paper and the responsibility of paper conservators, giving them a combined total of almost 30% of the overall amount of those working within conservation. The large number of these conservators reflects the size of paper collections within various museums and the medium's popularity with artists throughout the decades.

The Conservation Forum was a representative organisation for twelve different conservation-representative groups from the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Originally called the National Council for Conservation-Restoration (NCCR), it was incorporated in 1998 and subsequently changed its name to the Conservation Forum. Established with the support of the Conservation Unit, this organisation first suggested that a number of representative bodies should merge. Research undertaken by the Conservation Forum (prior to convergence taking place) into the membership details of the various representative bodies in 2002 noted that the Institute of Paper Conservation had a total membership of 1,308, while the IIC, which represented a multitude of conservation disciplines, had 1,562.

Table 1.7.2(b) contrasts the numbers working in conservation in the public sector in 1971 with those in 1998, highlighting the growth in the various sectors over this time. Conservation sectors such as archaeology, independent museums, university museums, and even the National Trust did not exist when the original survey was undertaken, and their existence reflects a growing awareness of conservation over this period. The data illustrates that not all conservators work with objects. Some are involved in training or advocacy, as evidenced by the numbers working in the heritage sector.

**Table 1.7.2(b): Number of Conservators by Type of Public-Sector Employer, 1971-98**

Source/Year	1971		1998	
	No.	%	No.	%
Archaeology Unit	0	0	8	1
Area Museum Service	8	7	18	2
Ecclesiastical Body	0	0	19	2
Heritage Agency	16	14	77	7
Independent Museum	0	0	44	4
Local Authority Museum	40	35	214	20
National Museum	51	44	491	45
National Trust	0	0	31	3
Training Centre	0	0	117	11
University Museum	0	0	43	4
Others	0	0	19	2
Total	115	100	1,081	100

Source: Winsor, 1998.

Not all sections within conservation have developed at the same rate. Conservation can be described as being on a continuum of development from specialist cleaner through recognised apprenticeship training, to full academic qualification and, today, the conservation specialist within his/her chosen area. Not all conservators are at the end of this development process. Some remain best described as ‘specialist cleaners’, while others are only just developing from the apprenticeship phase.

One area of development in recent years has been in the practice of preventative conservation. Conservators, particularly those who worked in museums and galleries, found that a growing amount of their time was being spent on implementing preventative conservation measures, with increasingly less time on objects. These measures were aimed at minimising potential threats to the collection as a whole. This approach became a specialist area within museums, and a number of academic courses have been established to cater to the needs of this sector of conservation (Getty Conservation Institute, 1994).

### **1.7.3 Location of Conservation Practice**

Conservators work in two ways: they are either employed directly by institutions on a permanent or contract basis, or they work on a freelance basis. A succession of reports, culminating in a 1998 MGC survey into conservation provision, provides insight into where conservators work and the nature of that work. The survey identified 1,659 conservation posts within the public sector in seventeen different institutions. Over 70% of these were museums and galleries, with the remainder including heritage agencies, training facilities and archaeological units. Over 800 conservators – nearly half of the posts – work in the relatively small number of national museums, highlighting their role as centres of conservation expertise and practice (Winsor, 1998).



**Table 1.7.3: Job Function of Conservation Staff in Public Museums and Related Institutions, 1971-98**

Source/Year	1971		1998	
	No.	%	No.	%
Conservator	74	64	709	69
Conservation Scientist	0	0	33	3
Conservation Trainer	0	0	72	7
Conservation-Related Area	41	36	207	20
TOTALS	115		1,021	

Source: Winsor, 1998.

Not all conservators are employed for their manual skills. Some, through long association with museums, have developed specific expertise by which they are employed. When reviewing the services offered by conservators working on a contract basis, the 1998 survey noted that some specialised in areas of museum practice, such as collections management, disaster-planning/preventative conservation, and project management (MGC, 1998).

The development of conservation is reflected in these figures. In Table 1.7.3, we see that there were no conservation trainers or scientists in practice in 1972, but by 1998 there were 33 conservation scientists and 72 individuals involved in conservation training. These were new practices that began over the intervening period and became an integral part of the overall practice.

When, as shown in Table 1.7.3, the job function of these individuals was examined, four separate categories were identified: conservator, conservation scientist, conservation trainer, and conservation-related area. This last section was one of the largest groups, representing 20% of the total numbers surveyed. It was found to include framers, mounters, taxidermists and technicians, and was clearly populated by individuals who identified themselves as providing a conservation-support role, but who were not covered by the other job descriptions (MGC, 1998; Winsor, 1998).

Within the private sector, there were 1,992 conservators working in 661 different practices. Independent conservation practices serve the needs of those institutions that, for whatever reason, cannot employ conservators directly, but nevertheless have a need for professional conservation services. These conservators work on a contract or commission basis for public and private institutions, collectors, dealers and individuals with one-off/particular conservation problems (MGC, 1998; Winsor, 1998).

In a 1972 Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation report, it was noted that nine major collections relied solely on the services of private/contracted conservators, including collections such as the Ashmolean Museum, the Manchester City Art Gallery and the National Museum of Wales (Gulbenkian, 1972; Winsor, 1998). The total number of private/contracted conservators in practice within the field in 1998, as identified by the Museums and Galleries Commission, was 3,651 (MGC, 1998).

Finally, the MGC's Conservation Register identified thirty-nine different areas of specialisation provided by conservators in private practice. From this survey, it was apparent that these conservators offer two different types of service to their clients: one is a specialist hands-on treatment of objects within the category in which the conservator specialises, and the other comprises specialist conservation services developed by conservators working with collections, often required by institutions. Examples of this type are preventative conservation, disaster response, and collections management (Winsor, 1998).

#### **1.7.4 Changes in Conservation**

In her preface to *Managing Conservation in Museums*, first published in 1996, Keene points out that conservation is undergoing a period of evolution, and describes how it has developed from the 1970s to the 1990s, which is also the focus period of this research (Keene, 1996). She attributes this evolution to several factors including a changing emphasis in the allocation of resources, which has led to a greater understanding of the scale of the problem of dealing with collections. This in turn has resulted in a greater emphasis on collections management, and a subsequent rise in the importance of preventative conservation. The rise of preventative conservation, Keene maintains, has led to better storage and display conditions and, in turn, has provided conservation with greater influence within the museum sector.

Rose states that the changes that have occurred in conservation are a result of, in part, the maturation of the field of discipline. Other reasons for change, she notes, are due to changes within museums themselves, the impact of political, cultural and economic pressures on museum management, and the impact of national and international conservation bodies on practice (Rose, 1999).

The role of conservators has developed in the face of changes within museums. At the start of the 1970s, conservation mainly took place within large institutions, and the emphasis was on restoration. Curators were solely responsible for the collections in their charge, with conservation work often being carried out by specialist cleaners, movers or exhibition mounters (Rose, 1999). The focus of a collection's care was on the individual object. However, in time there was a realisation that the problems faced by conservation were enormous, and there needed to be a shift from a focus on the individual object to greater overall collections management.

### **1.7.5 Change Factors in Conservation**

Keene and Rose both point out that conservation is evolving. In her article ‘Conservation of Museum Collections’, Rose charts the development of conservation in museums over a thirty-year period, from the 1970s onwards. Based mainly on her experience within the USA, she notes that the changes that have occurred in museums over this period were the result of a redefinition of the role of museums, the impact of political, cultural and economic pressures on museum management, and a growing professionalism amongst museum staff. However, as argued in this thesis, the one factor that had the most impact on conservation was its emerging professionalism (Rose, 1999; Keene, 1996).

Both Keene’s and Rose’s assessments predate considerable research into changes that have occurred in the theory of conservation, which has had a major impact thereon and continues to this day. This research identifies how the practice of conservation has changed as a result of new thinking, leading to a greater understanding of materials, and new attitudes to conservation (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

Szmelter observes that dramatic transformations took place within the conceptualisation and practice of conservation in the last decade of the twentieth century. He maintains that the development and publication of codes of ethics and guidelines of practice by the various museums and conservation representative groups combined to provide rapid transformation in the conservation sector and museums worldwide. The combination of activity initiated in the 1970s, which reached fruition in the 1980s, had its impact on conservation in the 1990s (Szmelter, 2000). The rate of change by the end of the century was very rapid, the reasons for which are explored later in this thesis.

At the beginning of the period under review, the classical theory of conservation was predominant, providing the basic philosophy by which conservation was practised. However, criticism of the classical theory had developed over time, and the continuous questioning of conservation practice forced a review of the theoretical basis on which decisions were based. One simple example of this revolved around the notion of an object

being returned to its true state. If an object has a true state and conservation will return it to this state, it would suggest that it was residing in a false state prior to it being treated. This was clearly untenable and not true (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

Deciding on the nature and extent of damage is very much a subjective decision, and this too has changed, thus influencing theory. In the 1970s, if a print was discoloured, it would be routinely washed to remove the discolouration. Excessive discolouration was considered 'damage'. However, by the mid-1980s, the practice had begun to be questioned. Conservators began to wash prints less often, and print sellers began to note prints as being unwashed, which then became a selling point. An aged appearance or patina helped to sell prints, and it became a desired feature for collectors. Over the period of thirty years or so, potential damage has been transformed into an asset (Cohen, 2001).

By comparing the attitude shown by paper conservators towards the end of the twentieth century, with the previous example of the work of the Schweidler brothers, in the 1930s, we see a significant change. The Schweidlers were driven by market and trade expectation. They were secretive, and their interventions were based on market demands. By contrast, conservators in the mid-1980s were focused on the object and its care. This process of questioning reflects the roles, attitudes, market expectations and changing conservation priorities that influence the treatment that an object may receive. Decisions about the treatment, grounded in a changing theoretical approach, are subjective to the conservator and change over time.

As paper conservation emerged as an occupation, rules were drawn up to control its practice. These were, in part, a reaction to the excesses of traditional restorers and a means of controlling the practice within the new, emerging field of conservation, but they did have their bases in the prevailing classical theory of conservation. Two such rules were about reversibility and minimum intervention. The rule of reversibility states that anything applied to an object as part of its treatment should be reversible, while the notion of minimum intervention ensures that only the most minimal treatment is applied to an object to correct its condition (Child, 1996).

The concept of reversibility became criticised towards the end of the twentieth century, and instances in which the practice was not possible came to be better understood. Cleaning is an irreversible intervention. The solubility of materials can change over time, making them irreversible. When dealing with porous material, it is impossible to reverse all treatments applied, and, finally, materials applied to an object that is reversible can cross-link with that object over time. Numerous authors have highlighted these changes, leading to a downgrading of the notion of reversibility (Oddy, 1998; Ashley-Smith, 1998; Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

The principle of minimum intervention is the means by which a conservator, in treating an object, does the minimum amount required to correct/restore its condition. This principle is in opposition to the notion of reversibility. If the intervention is reversible, why would it need to be kept to a minimum, and vice versa? Critically, though, the notion of minimum intervention is a subjective decision. Its purpose is to limit excessive intervention. As Muñoz Viñas (2005) observed, ‘The principle of minimum intervention is a reminder that conservation is done for specific reasons, and there is no need to overdo it.’

These issues contributed to the notion of legibility, which was first mooted in the 1970s, but became popular as a concept in the 1990s. Legibility relates to the ability of an object to be correctly comprehended, moving the objective of conservation away, be it in a small way, from the overriding notion of an object’s truth being at the end of a conservation treatment. It made conservation focus, not just on the tangibility of the object being treated, but also on its intangible characteristics.

Growing criticism led to a reassessment of conservation theory by a number of commentators. The shift away from truth enforcement led to a greater focus on the message that conservation objects can communicate to the subjects engaging with them. The symbolic value of an object is not inherent within it, but generated by people themselves.

The principle of sustainability has been proposed as an advance on the two aforementioned principles of reversibility and minimum intervention. Sustainability (of the features of objects that give them their value) takes into consideration the needs of current users, as well as future users. It resulted from much of the thinking that emerged from work within the UNESCO committees from the late 1980s onwards. Sustainability empowers conservators to consider and protect the needs of a silent group of stakeholders in an object, namely its future users. By doing so, it also gives an object's conservation a long-term focus. The issue is seen as crucial to conservators going forward because it defines their role, and those of other allied experts, as being custodians of the needs of future users of the objects being conserved (Federspiel, 2001; Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

So what was the response of conservation to this questioning of how it performed? Caple while still holding to the notion of truth being the core objective of all treatments, developed a model that defines conservation as being an activity involving three factors: revelation, investigation and preservation. It also acknowledges that there can be more than one truth, and the model is a guide to decisions that need to be made to conserve an object (Caple, 2000).

A rival to the classical theory of conservation, known as the contemporary theory of conservation, emerged at the end of the twentieth century. It strives for a common-sense approach, for gentle conservation decisions, and sensible conservation actions. It is determined neither by truth nor science but, rather, by the uses, value and meanings that an object has for people (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

The contemporary theory of conservation views conservation objects as conveying a message. They are considered conservation objects because they are valued by people, and they are therefore considered worthy of conservation. If they fail to be valued, they may not be conserved. Hence, it is the subjects, and how the message of the object is conveyed to them, that have become the overriding governing factor in conservation theory.

Contemporary conservation theory has substituted communication of an object's meaning for the search for an object's truth. It is the job of the conservator to preserve that message, evolving his/her role into more than just that of a bench conservator charged with the treatment of a stand-alone object (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

However, in trying to determine the truth of an object, conservation has looked to science to provide it with a better understanding of the objects in its charge. It has looked to scientists to provide insight into the materials that comprise objects, their creation process, and the ageing of the same. The relationship between conservation and science is one key aspect of the development of conservation as a practice.

### **1.7.6 Museums**

In 1946, ICOM first defined a museum as being something that includes 'all collections open to the public, of artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material, including zoos and botanical gardens, but excluding libraries, except in so far as they maintain permanent exhibition rooms' (ICOM, 2008). In 2001, it defined a museum as being 'a not-for-profit-making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches and exhibits for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment' (ibid.).

Clearly much had changed between 1946 and the end of the twentieth century. This changing definition shows, on one level, how museums have evolved, and how their role has changed over time. Museums mean different things to different people. Alongside the debate about the purpose of museums there has been another, questioning their role in society.

Griffin is critical of the ICOM definitions, in that they describe the activities of museums at a certain time, but they do not define the business in which museums are involved. This,



he notes, is essentially knowledge or educational business (Griffin, 1998). It has been argued that, more and more nowadays, museums are in the entertainment business, while others see them as playing a key role in cultural tourism. However, nothing about the above ICOM definitions leads one to this conclusion.

From the various definitions, we see museums as evolving organisations, changing over time. There has been a fundamental change in how museums operate. Prior to the 1970s, museums were concerned with the collection, preservation and study of artefacts deemed to be of artistic, historic or scientific interest. They were elitist institutions, serving a limited audience. Museums were organised around collections, and because these collections were being held in perpetuity on behalf of the public, museums had little obligation to society at large (Appleton, 1999).

A museum collection and its study were the overriding purpose(s) of museums, but they have become subordinate to a focus on people and an array of other, associated activities. Museums have become very people-centred, with the visitor becoming the focus of the operation, from the development of a museum's collection to its physical layout and exhibitions. There is a belief that by turning museums towards people, their meaning and purpose are fundamentally changed, putting the future of these institutions into question (Appleton, 1999).

Appleton describes how museums currently engage with their visitors. Within the new Wellcome Wing of the Science Museum in London, during the screening of the television programme *Big Brother*, the museum asked its visitors if they thought that being a contestant on the show was harmful. Visitors were asked to vote yes/no/don't know. The vote was clocked up on large electronic displays. On the floor, visitors could create digital music or set up their own websites, while the space itself was dimly lit and had space-age sounds playing throughout. This was a museum, but not as we know it (Appleton, 1999).

Museums have emphasised increased social and ethnic functioning, with many trying to entice a variety of different social and ethnic groups to visit them. A report produced by the Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM) offers an insight into this practice, detailing two examples of how museums are trying to achieve this. The Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, in conjunction with social services, ran a textile course targeting Asian women with mental-health problems. The Tyne & Wear Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne has worked with social services. Michael, 'a real tearaway' who became involved in the production of a CD-ROM for the museum, gained considerable self-esteem in doing so (Appleton, 1999).

Looking back over the period under review, museums were undergoing a period of reassessment. They had to contend with competing priorities of professionalism, fundraising and greater visitor access. There was a growing emphasis on exhibitions, with many institutions organising the first large-scale blockbuster shows. Such exhibitions combined, for the first time, hundreds of objects with new/emerging technologies and graphics, and demanded fast-paced production schedules (Rose, 1999).

At this time, conservation took place primarily within the large institutions, and was focused on fine art or classical archaeology. Ethnographic and historical collections were usually prepared for display by the collector, scientist or curator who was in charge of them. Exhibited objects were the exception, with case-exhibition staff having responsibility for cleaning, restoring or possibly repainting exhibits prior to them being displayed. This began to change and responsibility for the care of objects began to pass to conservators.

The new post of conservator was created in many major art museums, and the majority of those employed were recent graduates of newly established third-level conservation courses. Museum conservation scientists continued to investigate new materials and processes in order to improve the effectiveness of conservation treatments.

There was a growing interest in the 1980s in the museum's role in society, with increased community development. Ethnic-based museums were established, and questions about the moral ownership of certain artefacts began to be asked, with the repatriation of objects being considered for the first time.

Furthermore, as the USA saw the effects of the post-industrial era, a new business model was forced upon museums. The activity, attitude and language of business were adopted by museums with performance measures, and the co-modification of museum products and profitability were incorporated into museum thinking. By the mid-eighties, articles began to appear in museum journals about managing change in museums, and a Conference was hosted by the National Maritime Museum Greenwich in order to tackle this topic. All of these factors heralded a new era within museums.

Conservators became aware of the impact of environmental factors on collections. There was a realisation that controlling the relative humidity to which a collection was exposed could have a greater impact on its overall condition than the efforts of bench conservators on an ongoing basis. Many museums began to develop strategic plans for collections care. This development, which this thesis will examine later, had a bearing on the relationship between conservators and curators within museums (Knell, 1994; Rose, 1999).

Public campaigns and outreach programmes began to include contributions from conservators, increasing awareness about collections-care issues. Initiatives within museums, focusing on objects being conserved, the inclusion of details about the conservation of objects within exhibitions, public talks, and the development of visible storage areas all had a similar effect (Rose, 1999).

The 1980s also saw changes in the way in which conservators engaged with museums. Regional conservation laboratories were developed, and museums and galleries began to use private conservators on a contract basis. Regional conservation centres undertook commissions for the institutions with which they were affiliated and the regions to which

they were geographically related. Conflict arose over time, as they were seen by museum management as sources of income, leading to disputes about prioritising collections care over funding potential. All of this is reflected in the research undertaken by the MGC on the structure of conservation (Rose, 1999; Winsor, 2001).

A decade later, in the 1990s, the concept of shared responsibility and an integrated approach to conservation problems developed out of museum training courses. Preventative conservation initiatives gained greater popularity. New courses in preventative conservation were organised for the first time, in response to a growing need for specialist education to meet museums' needs (Rose, 1999).

There was greater and more effective management within museums. Griffin has examined many of the major issues faced by museums in the 1980s, concluding that they were not very successful relative to institutions. They conform to Mintzberg's model of professional bureaucracy, in which specialists work independently of each other to gain control of the administrative process around them. This situation had been corrected by the 1990s, and management within museums had been much improved (Griffin, 1998).

Conservation attitudes had also changed. Treatments were more cautious, with less intrusive approaches being favoured. The goals of treatment had also changed. The emphasis on returning an object to its original state, the classical theory of conservation, had almost entirely died out. The tenets of conservation, like reversibility and minimum intervention, began to be questioned by the profession as a whole, and a new theoretical paradigm began to emerge.

Questions about object ownership, the functions of museums, the artist's intent, and the choice of object to be displayed began to be addressed. The intangible properties of objects began to be questioned and incorporated into curatorial and conservation attitudes.

### **1.7.7 The Political Influence on Conservation**

Museums operate within a climate primarily dictated by government policy. At any given time, the operating environment impacts on the museum, and depending on its response, the practice of conservation within that museum is also affected.

The state is responsible for the largest amount of cultural property in the country. National collections are held in trust by the government for the people of the state, and they are housed in national and regional museums. Central government has responsibility for national collections, while the responsibility for local collections rests with the various regional and local authorities. Further to this, the state, through the educational system, is responsible for the education and training of most conservators. In the past, the state has introduced legislation to protect and care for various types of cultural objects. Finally, the state is, through its various cultural bodies, the largest employer of conservators.

Responsibility for collections is divested to the regional management of the institutions in which they are housed. Local authorities and the central government fund the operation of these management bodies, but there is an expectation associated with that funding. The government executes its responsibility at arm's length from the collections. It controls these management agents through different instruments at its disposal, namely the auditing process, bodies set up to determine policies in the area of museums, various ministerial directives, conditions attached to the provision of funding, and, finally, legislation.

At one stage, many of the national museums were controlled directly by the civil service but, in many cases, their legal status was altered to that of trustee museums, governed by a board. The Heritage Act of 1982 and the Museum of London Act 1986 were the two pieces of legislation that achieved this. The Heritage Act 2002 introduced legislation to regulate access to underwater archaeology sites and the handling of wrecks (Keene, 1996; Windsor, 2001).

One body that has had a direct impact on the development of conservation over the past thirty years is the Standing Committee on Museums and Galleries, set up in 1931. In 1930, the Royal Commission of Museums and Galleries, established to investigate and report on the conditions of the nation's collections, recommended the establishment of the Standing Committee, which would investigate and report its findings to government on a five-year basis. This committee continued operating until 1981, when it issued its last report and handed its responsibilities over to the MGC, a new organisation set up to fulfil this role (Winsor, 2001).

The Standing Committee's remit remained relatively unaltered until 1981, when it became the MGC, and this, in turn, was reformed into Re:source in 2000 and, eventually, the current Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. This developing remit altered the Standing Committee's role, from reviewing the operation of museums to having resources with which it could assist them.

The Committee reported every five years, and throughout its reports it highlighted the conditions of collections and the need for specialists to conserve them. Its regular reviews were the means by which difficulties within museums could be communicated to central government. In its fifth report, it highlighted the urgent need to build a new scientific research laboratory in the British Museum. It also outlined the need for the establishment of conservator posts, and there was a gradual recognition that the staffing structures at the time did not reflect the newly established technical grades, leading to the first conservators being employed throughout practically all of the national collections. Winsor acknowledges the support given to those first conservators by the Institute of Professional Civil Servants' Union, which negotiated on their behalf to achieve recognition (Winsor, 2001).

Up to the beginning of the 1970s, the Standing Committee had little direct involvement with conservation. During the 1970s, it began to highlight the lack of trained conservators in the national institutions. It subsequently established, in conjunction with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, a committee chaired by Sir Colin Anderson to investigate the

possibility of establishing a training institute for conservation in the UK. The committee went on to report that such an institution should be set up, but, although it had near universal support from conservators and the museum system, it was not implemented by the government.

In addition, the Standing Committee went one step further in 1980, when it set up a subcommittee to investigate the current state of conservation. It conducted research and produced a report, the conclusions of which were described as being ‘an excellent summary of best practice in conservation and collections care’ (Winsor, 1998). This report fell short of recommending a central training body, suggesting instead that there should be four ‘hub museums’ to provide a focal point for the dissemination of information and knowledge about conservation. Although well researched and supported by conservators, none of its recommendations were implemented because of the economic constraints of the time. A central-hub idea to promote conservation was a suggestion that Brandes in his report (Brandes, 1984).

When established in 1981, the MGC had a budget of £155,000 to support museums, and £26,500 specifically for supporting conservation-related projects. In 1987, the MGC established the Conservation Unit, a semi-autonomous unit for promoting conservation within the museum sector. This unit was in existence until the early 1990s, when responsibility for its activities was subsumed back into the core MGC. In its time, the unit had a direct, major impact on conservation. It provided a grant programme that, at its peak, in the early 1990s, dispensed an allocation of £120,000. It undertook critical research into conservation standards, which was relied upon in time by many of the government’s auditors. It also focused specifically on the importance of improving training.

In 2005, the convergence process resulted in the merger of five separate bodies, known as the Vanguard Group of the NCCR, into the Institute of Conservation (ICON). This is the largest conservation-representative body today, and it operates a professional scheme called the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR).

By the end of the 1980s, national museums were required by the Office of the Arts and Libraries to submit annual business plans. Museums of all types began to produce corporate plans and strategy documents, which, in turn, were measured against key performance indicators. These business plans were replaced by annual funding arrangements.

In the early 1990s, the Conservation Unit produced a series of publications entitled *Care of Collections Standards*, for good collections care. These standards were later used by the Audit Commission, the National Audit Office (NAO), and other governmental bodies with responsibility for monitoring the performance of publicly funded organisations.

The Audit Commission had responsibility for auditing the local authorities, while the NAO acts as the external auditor of central government. The NAO performed its first review of the management of collections in 1988. A series of benchmarks for good collections care was devised, and these benchmarks relied heavily on the research previously carried out by the Conservation Unit and the MGC (Keene, 1996).

Following on from the review in 1988, the Audit Commission devised a scheme called 'Best Value', the purpose of which was to assess how local authorities cared for their collections. This scheme attempted to analyse how these authorities conducted their inventories, valuations, security, insurance, conservation and access to collections. The involvement of the two auditing groups moved the care-of-collections debate from theory to a measure of effective museum management. Part of the Audit Commission's (and the NAO's) process was to assess the effectiveness of a museum's collection-management and preventative-conservation programmes. This was testament to the work of all involved in promoting preventative conservation, and it appears to have been both effective and influential.



Other political developments had an impact on museums, which, in turn, affected conservation. Appleton has identified two main reasons for this change: cultural leftism, and the ideology of the economic right. Cultural leftism maintained that objective knowledge was the mechanism by which the Establishment asserts its intellectual hegemony, and collecting objects was seen as a means of gaining power among Western elites. The cultural right, on the other hand, was embodied in Conservative governments under Lady Thatcher, and it attempted to ensure that arts bodies became service-delivery organisations, forced to justify their existence by giving value for money. The Conservatives emphasised the ‘customer always being right’, providing a convergence of aims from both sides of the disparate debate. By the time the Labour government took over in 1997, ‘business and culture both spoke a similar language – empowerment, inclusiveness, diversity and customer satisfaction’ (Appleton, 1999).

Harrison notes the ongoing democratisation of the museum profession, in that museums are becoming institutions that are not dedicated to the socio-economic, primarily male, elite. He further observes that, because of the opening-up of education, the profession itself has become more diverse, with a wider cross-section of people working within museums (Harrison, 2004).

As examined earlier in this chapter, museums have had changing objectives over time. The museum has been a means of communicating with the marginalised in society, a tourist attraction, a generator of economic activity, and, more recently, become a sustainable and green enterprise. All of these changes have had an indirect bearing on conservation.

The focus on finance had implications for some museum services, and for some institutions. Under the new criteria, many museums found it difficult to operate and some closed, with the loss of conservation posts, amongst others. The new financial focus had an impact on how conservation was practised within the national institutions, as there was a greater emphasis on treatments being cost-effective. Keene notes that the national museums are susceptible ‘to more direct pressure’ in order to conform to government

policy. They are relatively well protected, financially, and they have the resources to implement these policies in their organisations (Keene, 1996).

From the above, it can be seen that the government has a central role in the care of collections in its charge. Collections care is in competition for scarce resources, but information also plays a key role in improving this sector. The work of the MGC and, specifically, the Conservation Unit provided key information that the auditing bodies adopted and implemented. This had a direct impact on the care of the national collections, with few extra resources required from the government.

### **1.7.8 Regulation**

Conservation, as an occupation, has developed from simple beginnings into a focused organisation, dedicated to its core purpose: the preservation and conservation of cultural objects. Since its emergence, it has continued to grow, changing considerably over the time frame of this research from 1975 to 2005. By analysing this change, we can gain a greater insight into the choices that were available to conservation practice and better understand the logic behind its development.

Two separate approaches are worth exploring in trying to better understand the development of conservation: a greater insight into the theory that underpins organisational development, and an outline of the theory of professionalism.

Self-regulation is reflected in the many codes of conduct and ethics that have been compiled by the different representative bodies, at both national and international levels. The representative bodies tend to fall into three groupings: those that represent a division of practice (for example, oil-painting restorers or paper conservators), national bodies that represent a group of conservators, and, finally, international bodies established by the states or by conservators themselves. Self-regulation also extends to the accreditation process, which was introduced to provide assurance to the users of conservation services.

Accreditation was first introduced in the late 1990s, after two failed attempts. This is a system whereby conservators submit themselves to a peer review, which assesses their conservation practice. The reasons for establishing such a system were summed up by Buchanan (2001): to protect users of the service, to provide the client with assurance, and to protect the objects being handed over to the conservator for treatment. The successful establishment of the accreditation process was seen by Fairbrass and Rickman (2001) as the difference between a learned society and a professional body.

Regulation by the state is generally in the form of legislation relating to the museum sector as a whole (Winsor, 2001), or through political interventions in relation to training and education (Roy, 2001). Conservators are governed by codes of ethics that promote good practice and the interest of the general public, both today and in the future (Keene, 1996; Caple, 2002; ICON, 2009). These codes are devised by the governing bodies of conservation, at both national and international levels. They constitute a regime of self-regulation that is adjusted on an ongoing basis, as our understanding and knowledge of the area changes.

## **1.8 The History of Paper Conservation**

The history of paper conservation is entwined with the history and development of paper as a support medium, and how it has been used in the creation of art.

Paper can be dated to the first century AD, and credited to the Chinese. The art of papermaking quickly spread to other countries, eventually being manufactured in Europe. It was taught to the Moors by papermakers captured in battle, while it spread to Europe during the Crusades and to North Africa during the Moorish conquest. Cotton rags, allowed to ferment for some months, were beaten by hand or with stampers connected to a waterwheel. The resulting pulp was suspended in a vat of water, into which a deckle and mould – effectively a wooden frame with mesh over it – was dipped, and a thin covering

of the fibres lifted from the vat. It was a skilled process and produced paper that was both durable and long-lasting. It took time to produce a sheet – almost three months from start to finish – with the bulk of the time cantered on maturation of the rags (Hunter, 1978).

Paper was exclusively made by hand up until the invention of papermaking methods by machine. In 1670, a device known as a Hollander, invented in the Zaan district in north-eastern Holland, began to be used to mechanically break up rag fibres for papermaking. This allowed for its more efficient manufacture, which was needed in order to keep up with the demand generated by Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century. In 1844, Canadian Charles Fenerty and German F.G. Keller had invented a process to turn wood pulp into fibres, and by 1882, the first wood-pulp mill was in use in Canada. This ended the near 2,000-year dependency on pulped rags, leading to the emergence of paper as a cultural material (Hunter, 1978).

'Art on paper' is a term that includes a range of art-based cultural objects, such as watercolours, prints, drawings and paper sculpture. Each of the divisions within this category is based on the particular media or technique used in its creation, and, subsequently, each has different properties.

Stevenson (1994) writes that fine-art prints began circulating throughout Europe during the fourteenth century, initially being collected by artists. They were used to stimulate art creation (mainly painting and sculpture) within Northern and Southern Europe, with a function similar to that of an artist's copybook designs. In time, prints began to be amassed by collectors, who mounted them in volumes or stored them in drawers or solander boxes. The earliest identified intervention dates back to 1573, detailing the use of poultices for removing grease from the paper of a print. Print collecting became very popular at the end of the nineteenth century, with many books published during this time, informing collectors as to how to care for prints and properly mount them for inclusion in volumes and on decorated backings.

Artists made their own pigments until the advent of the artist's colour man. Prior to this, raw pigment was sold to artists by the early colour men or local apothecaries. London colour men of the sixteenth century were makers of dry/powdered pigment, mainly for the use of house painters. By the eighteenth century, they were making pigments for artists, one such colour man being William Reeves, who opened his shop in London in 1766. By 1780 Reeves had developed moist, ready-to-use paint cakes for artists and amateur painters alike, and this period marked the beginning of the availability of commercially produced watercolours.

There had been little demand for watercolours prior to the 1760s because of poor production methods. Watercolour painting became popular from this period onwards, primarily because of the availability of reliable pigments. One of the main drawbacks of this medium, however, is its instability in light, and it has been long understood that continuous exposure of a watercolour to light will be detrimental to its fineness. John Ruskin was an avid collector of J. M. W. Turner's watercolours. To protect his collection, Ruskin had cabinets made in which the framed drawings and watercolours were stored, the purpose being to protect them from light (NGI, 2011).

Books are distinguished from other paper-based cultural items because of their binding, dating back to the first creation of the book form, and this is now a particular field of research. Books are included under the overall banner of paper conservation. They are composed primarily of paper, but conservators working within this category require a detailed understanding of binding techniques. Significantly, the first paper-conservation representative group, set up as a subgroup of the IIC, was called the Book and Paper Group.

Kosek (1994), who was Head of Pictorial Art Conservation in the British Museum, dates the probable beginning of the restoration of paper-based cultural objects to the twelfth century, and to the start of paper-manufacturing in Europe. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, drawings became more elaborate. Loose drawings were vulnerable, but those in albums had a greater chance of survival. Some of the earliest known interventions

to repair and restore damaged drawings date back to Giorgio Vasari's *Libro de Disegni* (1574). This collection of five volumes of drawings displays many signs of intervention to improve the appearance of the drawings, disguising damage and enhancing their appearance.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, artists had begun to retouch other artists' work. Rubens was known to have retouched work by a number of artists, including Dürer and Caravaggio. Louis XIV employed artists to copy drawings, and some of the volumes of his drawings that remain have examples of retouching on faded or damaged parts. By the nineteenth century, the term 'restoration' began to be used, with a definition included in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* of 1801.

There was an increase in the artistic appreciation of the integrity of art, which was observed at the beginning of the twentieth century. This, combined with the progress of the scientific analysis of artefacts, ensured a change of approach to the treatment of works of art on paper. The first documented involvement of science in the treatment of a damaged work of art took place in 1921, in the British Museum, when Alexander Scott assisted with the removal of an oil stain from a drawing by Watteau.

Modern paper conservation emerged from a greater understanding of the nature of paper-based material, and this was achieved through the application of science to various problems encountered. It led to a realisation that previous methods of intervention, once considered harmless, had the potential to do long-term damage to the paper object being treated. A new way of treating this material needed to be found, and this became known as paper conservation.

## **1.9 The Development of Paper Conservation**

The origins and emergence of paper conservation as a distinct discipline have been associated with the experience of volunteers involved in the recovery of damaged materials in the aftermath of the flood of Florence, which took place in 1966. The Arno River burst its banks, flooding and damaging vast quantities of mostly paper-based cultural material. An international appeal went out at the time, asking for assistance, and several bookbinders and paper specialists from the UK volunteered to assist the local authorities in the aftermath of the flood. For many of these volunteers, the experience changed their approach to the practice, and it had a long-lasting impact on the development of conservation (Ellis 2014).

John Corduroy was one such volunteer. He later became the first educator within the newly established archive-conservation course in the Camberwell College of Arts, London. The course was established in 1969, and its commencement represented a new awareness of the need for a different approach to archival items, and paper-based materials in general (Fairbrass and Rickman 2001).

Cohen refers to a seminal moment in the development of paper conservation within the USA, when newly trained conservators began to replace retiring trade restorers within the museum and gallery sectors. The archive-conservation course at Camberwell provided just such trained conservators, who went on to replace similar retirees within the museums and galleries of the UK (Cohen, 2001).

McAusland's (2001) documented experience of apprenticeship within a trade environment, and subsequently setting up as a self-employed conservator, describes this transition. The old trade approach centred on cleaning large numbers of prints and works of art on paper, with little sensitivity shown to the medium or aesthetic of the work itself. Many of the treatments applied to works of art on paper at that time, as detailed by McAusland, would be considered barbaric by today's standards, but this growing

understanding of a need for a new approach further fuelled the development of paper conservation.

The establishment of the Book and Paper Group (later the Institute of Paper Conservation) as a subgroup of the UK's Institute of Conservation marked a clear structural starting point for paper conservation. It was the beginning of a process that would see paper conservation organise, develop its knowledge base, and begin to regulate its practice. It also marks the beginning of the professionalism of paper conservation.

Research and development into aspects of paper conservation and bookbinding were central to the development of paper conservation as a practice. The research was undertaken by conservators on a voluntary basis, and to a considerably high standard. The Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC), set up in 1976, published peer-reviewed articles about various topics of interest in its publication, *The Paper Conservator*. It also organised conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures, all dealing with the various aspects of the paper-conservation practice.

Published in 1976, a review of the first four editions of *The Paper Conservator* highlighted the fascination with chemical processes in paper conservation at the time. In particular, a number of articles related to bleaching, a process known and used by paper conservators, but one that was not well understood. Cohen (2001) notes that one of the key moments in the development of paper conservation in the United States was reflected in a shift away from the chemical approach, to one that adopted a more holistic stance. She quotes an article by Keiko Keyes, first published in 1987 entitled 'Alternatives to conventional methods of reducing discoloration in works of art on paper', as being just that moment (Keyes, 1987).

Two specialist editions were published around the same time as Keyes's article. The first was a combined volume on health and safety within predominantly state institutions, published in 1985. The second concentrated on articles about the conservation of paper-



based Asian art, and this was published later. The former publication reflected a growing need for a greater awareness thereof when working within conservation facilities, while the latter publication concentrated on a topic in which paper conservators were interested. A Japanese approach to the treatment of works of art on paper had a long, well-established tradition within its society, and the techniques were of interest to Western paper conservators, who had begun to adopt some Asian techniques into their practices. The great interest in this area was reflected in the fact that there were two other editions specialising in aspects of Japanese and oriental paper techniques.

## **1.10 What is Paper Conservation?**

Paper conservation involves the conservation of paper-based cultural material, including categories such as works of art on paper, archival material, books and ephemera. Once an object has been created on or from paper, it falls to the paper conservator to treat it when damaged and to advise on its safe use, handling and storage. Responsibility for the treatment of parchment also falls to paper conservators. Parchment's use predates paper as a support medium, and it is found in many books and legal documents that have survived to the present.

Paper conservation is a division of the overall practice of conservation, and it has developed within the wider conservation environment, as previously stated, but it also has its own characteristics as a practice. These characteristics are related to the nature of the support material. Paper is organic, and so it decays. Interventions are, therefore, often required to prolong its lifespan. Many collections hold vast quantities of paper-based cultural material, but limited resources to preserve and conserve them. It is the responsibility of paper conservation to prioritise collections for treatment and implement collections-management strategies.

Paper-based cultural material is at risk of damage from several potential threats. An inherent flaw may exist in the way in which the object is created, stemming from the artist's, printer's or bookbinder's poor choice of materials. The technique or combination of materials used can also impact on the longevity of the object. Once created, the condition of a paper-based cultural object is affected by how it is handled or used, how it is framed or stored, and, finally, the potential environmental risks to which it is exposed. The paper conservator's role is to intervene to correct inherent damage within the paper-based object and to prevent further damage from occurring by way of the intervention itself, thus minimising all potential risks in the future (Clapp, 1978).

A paper-conservation approach is marked by an adherence to principles that govern and control the nature of intervention to correct damage. These principles came about from the realisation that many of the treatments previously implemented to treat damage had a detrimental effect on the longevity of the work itself. Rules developed, in order to control the amount and nature of interventions. A key value for paper-conservation intervention, particularly as it emerged as a practice, was the minimum-intervention approach, the aim of which was to limit the amount of intervention to correct inherent damage. Furthermore, there was an insistence that any process employed had to be reversible.

Within the United Kingdom, the emergence of paper conservation can be traced to the beginning of the 1970s and marked by three events: the experience of volunteers involved in the Florence flood, the establishment of the first archive-conservation training course in Camberwell College, London, and, finally, the establishment of the first representative body for paper conservators, the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC), in 1976.

As members of an emerging practice within the museum and gallery sector, those within the IPC were anxious for acceptance. There was a strong belief in the rightness of their approach over the status quo, and they set about dominating the sector. They emphasised professionalism within paper conservation, with activities designed to further its aims. The development of knowledge, research, workshops and conferences about paper

conservation were all initiatives undertaken primarily by the IPC committee, to foster a greater understanding and knowledge of the practice (Fairbrass and Rickman 2001).

By analysing published articles, trends in the development of paper conservation as a practice can be determined. When *The Paper Conservator* first emerged as a journal in 1976, there was a fascination with chemical processes and a great thirst for knowledge about treatments. Paper conservators' desire to gain greater insight into aspects of the practice has already been dwelt upon earlier in this chapter. This desire for continuous improvement is something that has been maintained over time within the discipline.

As paper conservation emerged and developed, it marked a period of considerable change within the museum sector. The nascent role of paper conservation was to treat individual, damaged works of art or books, repairing and returning them to their respective collections. This role would change and evolve over time, encompassing aspects of collections management, within museums, to one of strategic development. At the end of the period under review, paper conservation played an integral role in the operations and development of many museums, libraries and galleries within the United Kingdom.

The activities of the IPC seem to have been divided between those designed to enhance the skill base of its members, and those promoting its values to the wider museum community. Change within paper conservation was propelled by way of a greater emphasis on professionalisation. It seems to have had the dual purpose of controlling and setting an internal standard for paper conservators while simultaneously promoting a deeply held belief in the rightness of their practice within all areas of the museum sector.

Among sociologists, a greater understanding has developed into the use of the professionalisation process to further the aims of occupational groups. When paper conservation first emerged, there was little understanding of the use of this process as a means of progressing the acceptance of the values of an occupation. Furthermore,

sociologists have continued to explore the nature of a profession and its role within society.

There is a clear arc of understanding into the nature of a profession, which can be traced in close parallel to the development of paper conservation as an accepted occupational practice. Paper conservation and the wider conservation practice could not be described as having achieved full professional recognition, yet, by the end of the period under review, there were no alternative approaches beyond a conservation one. In time, a paper-conservation approach had become the dominant method of intervention, both within the museum sector and with the general public.

Although it has gained almost universal acceptance as a principle, there is little appetite for developing paper conservation, or conservation in general, into a full profession. It is as if the process of professionalisation, once adopted and implemented, provided paper conservation with a limited professionalism. This brought paper conservation to a point of acceptance for its occupational values within the museum sector, and this was seemingly sufficient.

Given the emphasis that paper conservation places on its professionalisation, it is worth exploring the value of this process to the discipline. By understanding how paper conservation and professionalisation interact, we are provided with greater insight into the value of both processes.

### **1.11 How Paper Conservation has Changed and how this is Relevant**

From its early beginnings to its establishment as a practice, paper conservation has continued to develop and change. It has done so in response to a greater understanding and knowledge about the material it was responsible for, as well as to developments that

occurred in the wider environment in which it operated. The aim of this research paper is to gain a wider understanding of the way in which this change occurred, why and when it happened, and the implications of such change on the occupation of paper conservation. It is considered that an understanding of this process of change has a value for those responsible for making decisions about paper conservation, both today and in the future.

Increased understanding of the media was the result, as we have seen earlier, of continuous exploration into the various aspects of paper conservation that were of concern. This research was undertaken by paper conservators and conservation scientists alike, and it clearly had an impact on paper conservation theory and the nature of paper conservation practice. Such continuous research fostered a greater understanding of the treatment of paper-based cultural material and is a process which continues to the present day.

But paper conservation also responded to changes it encountered in the environment it operated within, namely, the museum sector. The representative organisation that was present when conservation emerged was considerably different to that which was *in situ* at the end of the period under review. It was important for paper conservation to be able to communicate its message. It needed to engage with other stakeholders in the museum sector in order to emphasise the logic behind choosing a conservation approach. It was anxious to be accepted as a practice, and it had to decide how best to organise itself to realise these aims – aims which changed over time depending on the threats and opportunities it faced. Some questions remained unanswered. How relevant to the development of paper conservation were these changes and were there other options available at the time?

As a practice, paper conservation made choices that were related to the structure and nature of its representative body, the IPC, and these choices would have implications for its acceptance. Strategic choices were made that would determine how paper conservators would engage, and have contact, with other paper conservators, while at the same time, how they would engage with others within the wider arts sector. But by far the most

significant choice made at this stage seems to have been the emphasis the practice placed on professionalism. In the first line of the first newsletter, paper conservation emphasised the value of the professionalisation process. It clearly regarded this process as providing the best possible opportunity to establish itself and mature.

By choosing to become a professional body, paper conservation was attempting to develop its relationship with both the state and the public alike. The key characteristic of a profession is that it highlights a relationship between the practitioners of that profession, the public and the state. All three had a vested interest in the potential success of the paper conservation project. Paper conservators, by dint of their overall ethos, wanted to see paper-based cultural material cared for properly. The state was the custodian of vast collections of paper-based cultural material, primarily held in museums, and had a duty to the general public, who, ultimately, were the owners of the material. All three had their own reasons for ensuring that the material was cared for in an appropriate manner.

As the practice emerged, paper conservators challenged the status quo of the time. They sought to have their own approach preferred to the prevailing trade approach, and the way they chose to pursue this end was by using the professionalisation process. By offering, as they did, to protect the national heritage for the enjoyment of current and future generations, they were proffering a concept beyond that which the trade restorers could offer, and, moreover, it was focused on the public.

Ultimately, change is driven in all organisations by people, and to understand any change within an organisation it is necessary to focus on those who both championed the change and those who implemented it. Their motivation is critical to the successful implementation of any proposed change. As, too, is the reasoning behind why they have been tasked with the responsibility for implementing this change. Analysing the choices they made provides a valuable insight into the development of the practice.

In summery by the end of the period under review, the practice faced little if any opposition to its philosophy of intervention. This was not the situation in the early 1970s, when paper conservation first began to emerge and to organise itself. Clearly the choices that paper conservators made during this period led to their acceptance as the means of intervening to conserve works of art on paper. The choices made, and the adoption of the process of professionalisation, led to a successful outcome for the practice of paper conservation. By the end of the timeframe under review, paper conservations philosophy of intervention was fully accepted within the museum sector and by the wider public as the method to treat paper-based cultural material .

## **Chapter Two: Organisational Change and Professionalism**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The objectives of this research were to explore how the conservation of paper-based cultural objects have changed over a thirty-year period, from 1975 to 2005, to ascertain what led to these changes and, finally, to determine the implications of these changes for paper conservation.

In Chapter One, the development of conservation and paper conservation was outlined. This exploration identified the professionalisation process as being one of the key motivators for change within paper conservation over the time frame under review. As a practice, it placed great emphasis on professionalising. To better understand this process and the implications that it had for change within paper conservation, it is necessary to explore the theory of professional development.

There is extensive research literature on professionalism. It provides insight into the nature of a profession, how it develops, and why it is chosen by occupations as a means of organising. By comparing the theory of professional development with the manner in which paper conservation used the professionalisation process, we can gain a greater insight into how and why paper conservation chose to develop in this way.

Similarly, paper conservators comprise an organisation of practitioners connected through their practice, and the theory on organisational change is considered as having merit in trying to achieve greater insight into the changes that have occurred within. The research into organisational change will be considered, and its applicability to the development of paper conservation will also be considered. Considerable resources were committed to following this option, impacting upon the manner and the nature of change in the discipline. A greater exploration of the key theoretical developments that underpin both



organisational change and professionalism can provide insight into how and why conservation changed, allowing us to examine the way(s) in which it did.

This chapter will explore two theoretical aspects of the development of conservation, namely organisational change and professionalism. Both areas are examined to provide a greater understanding of how the organisational structures of conservation have developed over the period under review, whereby one aspect was emphasised: the professional nature of conservation.

## 2.1 Theories of Professionalism

As Davis (1998) stated, there is no such thing as a profession of one. A profession is a coming-together of like-minded individuals for the improvement of how they work. It is a cooperative exercise that has been described by Davis as 'individuals sharing an occupation voluntarily, organised to earn a living by serving some moral ideal in a moral, permissible way beyond what law, market and ordinary morality require' (p164). At its core, a profession represents a relationship between three groups: the general public, the practitioners of a profession, and, finally, the government.

Social theorists have had a long-term interest in the professions, and this can be traced through discussions in theory about authority, bureaucracy, market closure and class conflict. The two most general, commonly applied ideas underlining professionalism are that certain work is so specialised that it needs trained specialists to undertake it, and that it cannot be standardised. Larson (1977) notes that the development of theory relating to the professions can be classed into various different stages of understanding.

Freidson provides a more basic definition when he says that a profession is a group of institutions that permits members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work. However, he also notes that giving an accurate definition for the term

‘profession’ is fraught with difficulty. A profession, he asserts, is a folk concept that changes over time. No two professions have the same attributes (Freidson, 2001).

Although providing an accurate definition of a profession is rife with difficulty, there are certain work practices that have been accepted by society as traditional professions. Table 2.1 illustrates the historical development of these professions. The traditional professions mentioned many times in the literature are law, medicine and engineering. These are considered the ‘truest’ professions, held up as examples of the model to which fledgling professions should aspire. The traditional professions were considered vital practices, but ones that the state could not control, so an alternative means of control needed to be devised. A position of trust developed between the three parties: the state, the general public, and the professions. The state allowed the professions to regulate themselves in return for providing the best service within their areas of specialisation while acting for the public good.

At the core of all professions is a relationship between the practitioners of an occupation, the government, and the public. The state allows for greater autonomy to be afforded to a group of practitioners in return for the proper provision of a service, which, in turn, benefits the public. The relationship between the government and the professions was highlighted by Johnson as having a distinct function. It is the role of mediator between the professions and their clients, where the government defined in legislation who the clients were and the manner in which they should be helped (Miller, 2001). Davis’s research into the engineering professions noted two distinct elements to the practice of engineering: firstly, it is an occupation, and, secondly, it is a profession. He notes that the difference between the two is in the profession’s code of ethics.

Generally, the practice of an occupation carries a degree of risk, creating difficulties for society if unregulated. The practice of medicine is a good example. Consider the supply of medicines to treat sick people: if an unqualified individual made medicines, then this would put the well-being of people who relied on them at risk. For this reason, pharmacists are licensed, and there is a strict regime in place to ensure that they are fully

trained before they begin to practice. This provides reassurance to the users of the service, while, in turn, pharmacists are granted a degree of autonomy from the state in relation to their practice. This contract is implicit, rather than expressed, with the government and society trusting the profession to protect the public.

In relation to conservation, the government has a role in facilitating the academic training of its practitioners, while it is one of the largest users of conservation services, responsible for vast amounts of paper-based cultural material through its stewardship of many museums. The government educates paper conservators through the third-level system, but it is also one of the largest employers of paper conservators, as it strives to protect the collections for which it is responsible – a responsibility vested in it by the general public. So, there is a relationship between all three parties. The nature of this relationship is something reflected in the professionalism that paper conservation espouses, and an examination thereof should better illustrate the connections between all three parties.

**Table 2.1: Historical Development of Professions over Time**

1700s	Pre-Industrial	Divinity, Law, Medicine
1800s	Industrial	Engineers, Chemists, Accountants
1900–48	Welfare State	Teachers, Social Workers
1980s	Enterprise	Business and Management Specialists
1990s	Knowledge	Information, Communication and Media Specialists

Source: Brante, 1990.

Brante (1990) notes that the professional model develops from a sole-trader structure, in which the individual operates as a professional generalist, through a partnership model, in which groups of professionals with complementary skills offer a range of specialisms, increasing to a full range of professional-service organisations. A century ago, the professions were comprised of self-employed individuals linked through their association. They had autonomous relations with their clients and were protected by the state. More recently, the profile of the professions has changed to being comprised of mainly salaried individuals working for organisations. Murphy (1988) define a profession as being '[an occupation] based on advanced, or complex, or esoteric or arcane knowledge' (P288), or, in a different form (however, one that excludes the priesthood), 'formally rational abstract utilitarian knowledge' (Murphy 1988 p246-247)

Dingwell (1999) notes four studies that directly analyse the promotion of an occupation to full professional status, giving reasons in each instance as to how this was achieved. Holloway's (1991) study into the formation of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society observes that it gained its professional status as a result of moral panic surrounding the availability of unregulated compounds and their potential harmful effects on public health. It was an attempt by the state to regulate the market for chemical compounds of dubious medical benefit or quality.

State intervention also formed the focus of Halliday's (1987) research into the Chicago Bar Association, noting the inconsistency of the professional project in a large and divided group, which required the state to monitor the market and enable the professions to operate. Abbot (1988) was less concerned with the influence of the state, but emphasises that there needs to be a comprehensive understanding of the professions in relation to their environments.

Evetts (2013) addresses two other concepts traditionally associated with the professions, namely professionalisation and professionalism. Professionalisation is defined as the process by which occupations achieve the status of professions – a very popular concept in the 1980s and 1990s, but one that has since been in decline. Practitioners use this process

to achieve closure of the occupational group in order to maintain their own occupations/self-interests relating to salaries, status and power. They are effectively trying to monopolise the protection of the occupation for their own ends. Professionalism, on the other hand, is usually interpreted as being of occupational or normative value, and something worth promoting by and for those within the occupation. This concept has been re-evaluated to address concepts such as trust, discretion, the analysis of risk, and expert judgement.

## 2.2 The Four Stages of the Development of the Professions

It is worthwhile comparing how the theoretical approach to the development of a profession has changed over time as paper conservation emerged and became established. By doing so, we can compare the changes that have taken place in paper conservation with the changes in theoretical research into the development of the professions. This will enable us to assess the relevance of the theoretical approach to paper conservation and the extent to which it has developed as same.

The sociological-taxonomic perspective falls into two broad categories: naive and cynical (Brante, 1990). The naive perspective, in vogue around 1965, focuses on the positive nature of the professions. It identifies certain professions, namely teachers, as being responsible for developing rational norms within society at large, and professions such as engineers and physicians as being responsible for the economic, technical and general welfare of society. During the 1970s, they came to the fore, emphasising the monopolistic nature of the professions, eliminating competition with a view to gaining higher wages and remuneration. It was described as a form of collective egotism (Brante, 1990).

Four distinct phases of the evolution of research into the professions are discernible in the literature. Hargreaves (2000) and Sciulli (2005) identified three distinct phases, while a clear fourth develops from around the turn of the century and continues onwards. Firstly, the period from the 1930s to the 1970s was a time when the professions were viewed as

instruments of enlightenment. They were given a lofty status and highly regarded. The second phase, from the 1960s to the 1980s, was a period when the professions were viewed as problematic. They emphasised professionalisation, rather than focusing on the notion of a profession, while they questioned the idea that they performed for the common good. The third phase, from the 1980s onwards, saw the professions criticised as being self-serving, and involved in a power play between their various groups. The professions were accused of trying to dominate the public through their use of knowledge and social authority. The fourth phase, discernible in a body of literature that dates from around the turn of the century, continues to the present day. Described by Evetts (2008) as 'New Professionalism', it is characterised by a greater acceptance that professionals are socially motivated. Recognition is given to the common good work in which the various/different professions are engaged, and it questions the self-serving aspect proposed by previous researchers. It marks a shift away from the cynical sociological-taxonomic perspective, as outlined by Brante (1990), in favour of a more realist view of the value of a profession.

The four-stage model, outlined as follows, reflects the changing understanding of what constitutes a profession, how it develops, and the factors required for a profession to exist and thrive. Its formation as a research topic dates back to the work of Parsons, in the 1950s, and culminates in the most recent research into the professions. The different stages represent themes within the research into professions that were prevalent at particular times. What is apparent from this is that this field of research is constantly evolving, as the professions react and respond to changes within the environment in which they operate. Continuous research into this topic has developed a greater understanding of how a profession forms, establishes and develops. This greater understanding is reflected in the four-stage model.

### **Stage One**

Many of those analysing the developmental stages of research into the professions credit their beginnings to the work of Talcott Parsons (Wearne, 1989). Parsons was one of the

first sociological researchers who focused on the features that were unique to a profession. These became known as the trait (or attributes) approach. Research into the professions was mainly concentrated in the United States at this stage, and it focused on identifying the attributes within a profession and those that set a profession apart from other occupations. These attributes included the need for specialist education, collectivity of service, high social prestige, and autonomy in the conduct of professional affairs (Parsons, 1950). Sciulli notes that not a single foreign language developed a term equivalent to the word professions before the Second World War. Where there was recognition given to the concept, it included the class system, claiming that the professions were middle-class occupations (Sciulli, 2005).

The trait approach was built upon by other researchers. They continued to investigate this area, attempting to identify further characteristics that distinguished the professions from other occupations (Goode, 1957; Greenwood, 1962; Carr-Saunders, 1965). Wilensky (1964) identified specific steps towards autonomy and further identified the sequence of functions and Etzioni (1969) classified certain occupations into the categories of professional, semi-professional, and non-professional organisations of workers. Millerson, according to Johnson's (1972) survey of literature on the professions, found twenty-three elements by twenty-one authors, who noted different aspects of a 'true profession'. A further examination of the traits shows that no two lists are the same, with no agreed set of attributes common to all professions. Although no definitive list was achieved, a commonality in themes has emerged from the research undertaken at that time. These areas are noted by Brante (2000) as forming six elements of professionalism (see Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2: Elements of Professionalism**

Application of skills based on special knowledge
Knowledge base gives authority – access to information that others do not have
Requirement for advanced education and training
Formal testing and control of admission to profession
Existence of professional association
Existence of codes of conduct
Existence of accepted commitment or calling, sense of serving the public

Source: Brante, 2000.

Brante (2000) further notes that the key characteristics of professionals are their knowledge base and their association. Sociologists began to examine other characteristics of the professions in order to gain a better understanding. It was argued that one motivating factor of the professions was to gain control or autonomy over work. Freidson (1970) argued that a profession was a way of organising work, rather than a special area of knowledge, while Johnston (1972) believed that the professions were one way in which occupations could gain control of their work. He argued that the way in which a profession is organised determines the relationship between producers and consumers of a service, and powerful occupational groups can determine their consumers' needs and how these will be satisfied.



## **Stage Two**

The second phase of the analysis of the professions is characterised by a move away from the traditional trait model to a greater understanding of the complexities of a profession. The trait approach became the focus of much criticism.

Sociologists became critical of functionalism. They adopted a revisionist posture towards the professions that drew attention to their failure and, in time, explicitly rejected the perceived professional wisdom of that time (Johnson, 1972; Larson, 1977; Collins, 1979; Starr, 1982; Freidson, 1989).

Sociologists argued that professional claims were ideological (Freidson, 1970), while many of the traits ascribed to the professions were declared to be false (McKinlay, 1973). McKinlay wanted sociologists to be more critical of the definition of professions and Roth (1974) went further by noting that by focusing on the traits, sociologists ignored the professionalisation process, and this reinforced the power and the self-serving practices of the occupational group. This argument was extended by Freidson (1994), when he asserted that the study of the professions by socialists was influenced by their desire to gain professional status and impact on their acceptance as a legitimate profession.

Hargreaves describes this period as the age of professional autonomy. It was a period in which the unchallenged traditions of the teaching practice and the singularity of teaching practice were challenged. He also states that this period did little to support to teachers who were facing into immense change and an increased workload (Hargreaves, 2000).

Evans (2008) notes that there is a broad consensus that professionalism is a perception that is externally articulated and imposed, and it describes the professions' collective remit and responsibilities. This perception reflects 'the boundaries of the profession's actual and potential authority, power and influence – external agencies appear to have the capacity for designing and delineating professions. In a sense, then, professionalism may be

interpreted as what is effectively a representation of a service-level agreement, imposed from above (Evans, 2008).’ This ‘service-level agreement’ is particular to the individual profession that it reflects, and it evolves and changes over time. Helsby (1995) and Boyt, Lusch and Naylor (2001) contend that the individuals within a profession have the capacity to shape it. Professionalism is a social construct and, as such, is impacted by the attitudes and behaviours of those within a profession. It can be influenced by external changes as we have seen earlier. However the values that comprise the profession are a collection of values held by the members of that profession.

The individual practitioner is a key player in the construction of attitudes towards his/her profession, hence, professionalism is considered the expression of what is required and expected of members of a profession.

Evans (2008) makes a distinction between three different intents for a profession’s professionalism, namely that which is demanded or requested, reflecting a specific level of service, professionalism that is prescribed, and, finally, professionalism that is enacted.

Nolin notes that attempts were made to create a hierarchy of professions: traditional professions, semi-professions and non-professions. The notion that the professions served the common good was also challenged, while during Stage Two, the professions were accused of striving to dominate where service was involved (Nolin 2008) .

### **Stage Three**

The third phase of research, from the 1980s onwards, was marked by a cynicism that existed towards the professions as a whole. A profession was regarded as being self-

serving, in its members' interests, and much of the research undertaken during this time was polemic in nature and tone.

The work of Larson portrayed the profession as a developing system or, as she called it, a 'professional project'. She held that professionals could not be detached from the class system, and that the objective of the profession was to improve the economic position of its members. She noted, 'ideal-type constructions do not tell us what a profession is, only what it pretends to be.' Larson also argued that it was not sufficient to simply criticise the trait approach, but one needed to question what the professions actually do in everyday life to negotiate and maintain their special position. She held that the process of professionalisation was an attempt by an occupational group to translate one order of scarce resources – special knowledge and skill – into another – social and economic rewards (Larson, 1977).

Larson further maintained that the market played a vital part in the 'professional project'. The professional brings a body of relatively abstract knowledge to the market. If purveyors of that knowledge can control its dissemination, they are in the position of being able to bargain with the state for its provision. By restricting access to it, they are in a position to control their market and supervise its production. Prestige, Larson maintained, was incorporated into the professions by means of social mobility, and this she differentiated along three dimensions, as follows:

- Independence or dependence on an achieved market position
- Modern traditional
- Autonomous/heteronomous (defined by the group or society)

McDonald (1995), building on the work of Larson, examined how professions deploy their resources to gain social mobility. He contended that social closure is the most important aspect of the 'professional project', in that it controls access thereto, thus controlling the knowledge of the profession. Closure is achieved by restricting non-members' knowledge, controlling access to the profession through recognised training courses, and maintaining a policy of credentials to protect market services and, ultimately, jobs.

By contrast, Halliday argued that Larson's approach to the mobilisation of professional expertise was too restrictive, with the latter maintaining that a profession must achieve prestige if it is to maintain a monopoly within its sector. Halliday noted instances in which professional expertise could inform state administrations, improve decision-making, and provide a logic for rationalisation within state institutions. McDonald noted that, further to Halliday's work, members of governmental departments and the professions interacted on a regular basis. In his examination of the accountancy profession, he noted regular, active and multi-layered contact between the profession and governmental representatives (Halliday, 1987).

Abbott (1988) noted idiosyncratic developments in individual professions, highlighting that they did not develop along a hierarchical sequence. Analysis of an individual profession ignored the dynamic of competing professions for the same professional space. Abbott maintained that the main focus of a study of a profession should be on the claims, the way claim-makers make them, who the claim-makers are, and whom they are addressing. This identifies a profession's central task and the subjective character of what the profession does. It enables the way in which the profession claims jurisdiction over its task to be analysed.

#### **Stage Four**

As the twentieth century ended, the professions came under increasing pressure to change. The publications addressing this issue were reacting to the pressure under which the professions appeared to be labouring. What emerged after this phase of scrutiny seems to have been a new stage, a fourth stage of development in understanding the professions, or what Evetts (2008) calls the 'new professionalism'.

Nolin (2008) gives further recognition to this new, emerging fourth stage of analysis, marked by Freidson's 2001 publication, *Professionalism, The Third Logic*, and differentiated by a more prescriptive, rather than critical, approach. Evetts (2008) notes that the thread holding the new professionalism together was a shift in power as a result of pressure on the professions to be more accountable. This notion of a new, emerging professionalism is supported by a body of research undertaken within a short period of time, dealing with such aspects of professionalism as trust (Pfadenhauer, 2006), trust and competence (Svensson, 2006), occupational change (Evetts, 2003), and trust and occupational change (Evetts, 2006).

In most occupational situations, professionalism has changed with autonomy, giving way to accountability (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). However, it is agreed that a more considered definition of professionalism has the potential to excel beyond many of the difficulties associated with the complex and controversial issues involving the professions. This approach focuses on the intent of a profession, emphasising its quality of service, its performance of a certain function for society, and, finally, its benefits, by virtue of its value system. Evetts (2003) notes that the notion of professionalism is attractive to occupational groups because it enables them to define their problems and control the solutions.

Two points are particularly relevant at this stage in the exploration of the professions because they have an impact on our understanding of how paper conservation has developed as a profession. A profession is far from being a static concept, moreover it is something that is constantly evolving and changing. Trying to compare how paper conservation has developed professionally is fraught with difficulty because it too is constantly changing and evolving. Essentially, we are trying to identify a set of prescribed conditions that are present in a profession at a particular time that are also common to our understanding of the development of paper conservation.

Firstly, although new theories can improve our understanding of how the professions operate and develop, they do not supersede what has gone before them. Aspects of the trait

theory/approach remain valid. The research that has taken place since criticism was levelled at the professions in the 1970s provides one with a rich picture of their complexity, however, the trait approach provides a simplistic, linear outline with which the professions can readily identify (Miller, 2001). Secondly, Freidson's (1970) assertion that a profession is a folk concept highlights a difficulty, not only in trying to define a profession, but also, according to Nolin (2008), in trying to analyse it. Concepts that were relevant when applied to the professions in the 1970s may not apply to professions that emerged later and in different environments.

In his final book on the subject, *Professionalism: The Third Logic*, Freidson (2001) delivers a stout defence of the professions, addressing many of the myths that are, in his opinion, wrongly directed, providing us with a new, fresh way of viewing the advantages that the professions offer. He directly tackles the cynical approach towards the professions, as well as many of the criticisms levelled against them. He puts forward an argument for the social, moral and practical rationale for a professional logic, describing the soul of professionalism as a series of ideological shibboleths, or slogans that lack real meaning (Seron, 2001). He goes on to analyse the logic behind the terms being used, applying them in a practical way to the practice of a profession. Much of the logic contained within this argument has a direct bearing on the pursuit of professionalisation by the conservation activists (Freidson, 2001).

According to Hargreaves (2000) the concepts of professionalism and professionalisation are 'essentially contested', as philosophers say. Outside education, the professions have been represented theoretically, in the image of those who belong to them, who advance their interests by having a strong technical culture with a specialised knowledge base and shared standards of practice, a service ethic in which there is a commitment to client needs, a firm monopoly over service, long periods of training, and high degrees of autonomy (e.g. Etzioni, 1969). Larson (1977) identifies the criterion of autonomy, crucially, as one that helps distinguish professional from proletarian work. Freidson (1994) argues that common-sense discourses of professionalism and behaving like a professional have been captured by managerialism as a way to control white-collar

workers. Meanwhile, Schoen (1987) has recast professional action as comprising distinctive, reflective, practical judgement, rather than esoteric knowledge.

Freidson (2001) criticises the approach to the concept of monopoly within the literature, maintaining that it served only one purpose and was dominated by one overriding motive. Its use was grounded in an economic definition of the word, and this masks the social enterprise of learning. Economists regard a monopoly as being a conspiracy against consumers, whereas sociologists see it as a means of dominance.

The concept of social closure is also addressed and criticised, in that it generally has a broader scope than a monopoly, but is related to a privileged economic position. However, without social closure, the professions would not survive, and the basis under which they engage would be severely undermined. Both concepts are nearly always used invidiously when applied to the professions, but they represent another aspect of the provision of a professional service, that is, its commitment to quality work. The professional approach demands this, and it underpins all the professions. Monopoly and social closure, Freidson (2001) maintains, are ‘social devices for supporting the growth and refinement of disciplines and the quality of their practice’.

In his review of the literature on credentialism, Freidson (2001) notes the assertion by Bridges (1996) that ‘much, but not all, of the empirical investigation of educational credentials has been coloured by a polemic tone’, reflecting a negative approach towards credentials. However, credentialled workers are a theoretical solution to problems that are intrinsic to any complex society. In summary, Freidson notes that what has been undermined by criticism of the professions is ‘the right, even the obligation, of professionals to be independent of those who empower them legally and provide them with their living’. He notes that it is ‘a transcendent value that gives it meaning and justifies its independence. By virtue of that independence, members of the profession claim the right to judge the demands of employers or patrons or the laws of the state, and to criticise and refuse to obey them (Freidson, 2001).’

This 'transcendent value' is the key to the professions. It is a core attribute, unique and common to the individual profession, that excels it beyond the norm for the sake of the profession, for the general public it serves, and, finally, for the material with which it is charged for treating or caring. It is an opinion arrived at by Freidson after many years of research into the professions, and he maintains that it is what differentiates a profession from an occupation.

A number of researchers have commented on the role played by enthusiasm within organisations. It is viewed as a positive, emotional outlook and disposition, and, as such, is regarded as a positive enabler for groups similar to those in paper conservation. As a motivator to action, enthusiasm provides organisations with positivity and a means of production. The sharing of a passion about a topic is seen as being positive for the growth of a practice and interest ( Craggs, Geoghegan and Neate, 2016) .

Nolin (2008) maintains that the discussion about professionalism has been a kind of by-product to the sociology of professions. It can be seen as a value system or an ideology, disconnected from the complex and controversial issues of a profession. Evetts (2013) reinforces this, stating that sociologists have failed in their attempts to provide an operational definition of a profession, and that such a definition would be useful in clarifying the differences between professions and other occupations, discerning what it is that makes them distinctive.

Nolin (2008) is critical of researchers, maintaining that it is difficult to clarify the differences between professions and other occupations because of the lack of definitions, standards and theories concerning the professions. A tension was noted between the need for professions to develop theoretical tools to advance their quality of practice and a research field that has avoided producing such tools. The bulk of the research has been undertaken by two disciplines, sociology and economics, with neither providing a cohesive definition of a profession, thus hindering any complete articulation of the



concept. Nolin maintained that researchers had ‘manhandled’ the research into professions and professionalisation. As such, it is difficult to use the research as a starting point in any practical work within professions and would-be professions alike.

As we try to analyse the implications of the professional development of paper conservation, there are a number of relevant points to consider. Firstly, when paper conservation emerged as an organised practice, the trait model of professional development was predominant. Paper conservation organised in a manner that conformed to this understanding. Secondly, further analysis of professionalism through Stages Two and Three, as aforementioned, had little apparent relevance to, and few parallels with, the way in which paper conservation developed. However, in the fourth stage of development, significant parallels with the structures of paper conservation were noted.

The lack of tools hampers any investigation into the development of paper conservation as a profession and their use of the professionalisation process. The lack of definition of a profession further restricts the investigation into the nature of professionalism adopted by the practice of paper conservation. The overall concept of professionalisation is understood but unfortunately there is little if any mechanism within the theory of professionalism that enables change within a profession to be assessed. In an effort to acquire a mechanism that might enable this change to be better understood other relevant areas of analysis needed to be consulted. One such area of study relates to the field of organisational change.

## 2.3 Organisational Change

It is worthwhile comparing how the theoretical approach to the development of a profession has changed over time as paper conservation emerged and became established. By doing so, we can compare the changes that have taken place in paper conservation with the changes in theoretical research into the development of the professions. This will

enable us to assess the relevance of the theoretical approach to paper conservation and the extent to which it has developed as same.

When paper conservators first came together to establish their own representative body, they were conscious of the benefits that a single representative organisation could give their cause, namely the promotion of paper conservation as a practice. A single organisation held attractive options for paper conservators, and so the IPC was formed.

In the previous section, the theoretical approach to the development of a profession was outlined. This enabled a comparison to be made between the development of paper conservation in relation to the expanding body of knowledge into the professions. As an organisation, it made choices, and, as we learned earlier, it placed great emphasis on professionalism amongst its members. The choice of emphasising a greater professional approach was a strategic one. This was a clear strategy chosen by those involved in the establishment of the IPC. Organisational change is a field of research that concentrates on how organisations change their strategies, process, culture and procedures, and how this change impacts the organisation. As a discipline, it attempts to provide insights into how organisations emerge, elaborate and transform.

Organisational change theory can provide insights into the choices made by paper conservators as they organised and developed the discipline as an occupation. As a field of research, it can provide a greater insight into how paper conservation developed as an organisation. This area of research is quite extensive but by concentrating on how an organisation changes structurally and how this structural change is viewed by members of that organisation is valuable to this study. For example, Nolin (2008) highlighted the lack of theoretical tools to analyse the quality of practice within a profession. This lack of tools, coupled by the failure to provide a cohesive definition of a profession, hinders any complete articulation of the concept. Organisational-change research has tools that enable attitudes within organisations to be measured and assessed. These can be used to address the shortfall within the research into the professions.

The study of organisational change as a formal discipline dates back to the 1940s, with the work of Kurt Lewin (1946) and what became known as the planned model of change. Lewin is seen as a seminal figure of the planned approach to change, with widespread recognition of his pioneering work to the whole area (Senior, 2002; Burnes, 2004). Two of Lewin's theoretical ideas remain current today. The first is the notion that the status quo is a result of two opposing forces pushing in opposite directions. Change comes as a result of a weakness or strength on either side. Lewin also introduced to the change model the activities of freezing, moving and unfreezing, which reflect the difficulty in achieving change within large organisations. He asserted that a period of rest follows a bout of change in an organisation (Senior, 2002; Burnes, 2004).

Lewin inspired a number of other researchers, and their work eventually led to the establishment of the organisational-development approach to change within organisations. Work by pioneers, such as, McGregor (1960), Shepard, Blake and Mouton (1964), Tannenbaum (1968), Beckhard (1969), Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt (1980) and Argyris (1990) have all contributed to ensuring that organisational-development initiatives have been applied by many large and small organisations across many countries (Bell and French, 1995).

Planned change and the organisational-development approach, according to Coram and Burnes (2001), make up the 'iterative, cyclical process involving diagnosis, action and evaluation'. It has been described as being a top-down, autocratic, rules-based approach to organisational change, in which the organisations operate in a somewhat predictable and controlled environment. It places strong emphasis on change through small incremental steps. It tends to operate on the basis that common agreement can be reached. At its core is the belief that one type of change is relevant to all organisations.

The research by Coram and Burns (2001) has relevance to our understanding of how paper conservation developed. Many of the initiatives taken by successive IPC committees

readily followed just such an iterative cycle. There are numerous examples within the minutes of the IPC and the Conservation Unit that identify change events with a similar iterative cycle. Individuals on the IPC committee who proposed change events can be identified from the minutes. The committee went on, in many cases, to introduce changes, and they were evaluated in time.

The main criticism of the organisational-development approach is that it ignores the changing nature of the environment in which modern organisations operate. The incremental nature of the change, again, ignores the possibility for rapid transformation and, as such, has the greatest value for firms operating in a relatively stable environment. Personal and group interest has been shown to be a source of conflict and an inhibitor to change, and the organisational-development model has been criticised for not considering cultural and political factors when implementing change. The environment in which the IPC operated was relatively stable, with few examples of rapid transformation. There were examples of personal and group interest, but these seemed, in most instances, to have been with groups external to paper conservation, and, as such, did not inhibit the change. In fact, they may have facilitated it, in some cases.

In the 1990s, a new way – namely an emergent approach to organisational change – was advocated in response to developments, particularly increased environmental turbulence, being encountered by certain types of organisations within the environments in which they operated. Organisations had changed, and there needed to be a different, more dynamic approach to the way in which this change was viewed.

Essentially, the emergent approach used organisational change as a continuous process of experimentation and adoption, to enable an organisation to best meet the challenges in which they operated. With this new approach, it was believed that change operated as a multilevel, cross-organisational process that unfolded through a number of medium-sized incremental steps over a number of years. Change was regarded as being a political and social process, as opposed to a rational, analytical one (Burnes, 2004).

The main criticism of the emergent approach was that it operated under the assumption that all organisations function in a similar, turbulent environment. Not all organisations need transformational change. There was growing criticism of the model's overemphasis on cultural and political factors. Finally, it tended to follow a three-phase model similar to Lewin's unfreezing, movement and refreezing steps – something that had been criticised in the organisational-development method.

In time, the separate nature of these two approaches was questioned, with each having advantages and disadvantages, depending on the environment faced by the organisation, its structure, overall culture, etc. Coram and Burnes (2001) examined both methods and concluded that the two systems were not mutually exclusive, and they argued that there is no one best way to manage organisational change.

Other work undertaken by Burnes (1996) and Beer and Nohria (2000) developed the debate around the nature of change to determine a best fit, depending on the situation faced by an organisation at a given time. These different approaches also argue that there is no one best way to manage change, and that all change management is an amalgamation of two or more different fundamental approaches.

Senior (2002), drawing on the work of identifies three categories of change: smooth incremental, which is slow, incremental change; bumpy incremental, or periods during which smooth change increases; and discontinuous change, where major transformation results.

Senior (2002) also suggests that incremental change can be divided into two types: smooth and bumpy. He predicts that change happens slowly, in a systematic and predictable way, and at a constant rate. What he was describing in his analysis were periods of peacefulness that then became turbulent, as the pace of change accelerated. Senior, however, suggests

that this type of change is exceptional and rare in the current environment because of its turbulent nature, and it will not likely be so in the future.

The organisational-development model has, in recent times, taken into account the criticisms of the emergent theorists, leading to a second-generation organisational-development theory, which is more focused on the need for greater transformational change. The action-research model of change is one that resulted thereafter (Senior, 2002). It views change as a continuous process of confrontation, identification, evaluation and action. Its main focus is on the collaborative effort of data-gathering, discussion, action-planning and implementation between leaders and facilitators of change. Effectively, it is a combination of research and action. More recently, Strickland has analysed the dynamics of change within the natural world and defined these findings in terms of organisational transition (Strickland, 1998).

Researchers within the field of organisational change have developed tools that measure and assess how organisations respond to their environments. For example, both Daft and Weick (1984) and Milliken (1990) have analysed how organisations respond to their environments, finding that they do so by interpreting and responding to the issues that they face. In studies about organisational adaption, Meyer (1982) and Miles and Cameron (1982) have all noted that an organisation's identity affects its ability to interpret and take action. This identity is often seen as a means of defining how issues can be transformed into opportunities (Jackson and Dutton, 1988), while it also determines what is acceptable or legitimate in response to the issues encountered (Meyer, 1982). These tools are what Nolan (2008) highlighted as missing from the analysis of the professions, namely how they form and develop.

The work of Dutton and Dukerich (1991) was particularly relevant to this research for a number of reasons. Their investigation into how the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a regional transport authority, dealt with homeless people who used its facilities was considered. They analysed how people who worked for the Port Authority felt they were perceived by others as they tried to address the problem of homeless people using the

authority's facilities. They relied on the research of Daft and Weick (1994) and Milliken (1990) as well as Meyer (1982), Miles and Cameron (1982) and finally (Jackson and Dutton 1988) to assess how employees of the Port Authority reacted to the difficulties that arose with homeless people using the Port Authority buildings. Homeless people were using the Port Authorities facilities and there was a public reaction to this. The employees reaction to this problem was the impetus for change.

Dutton and Dukerich (1991) examined how the authority reacted to the problem. They noted the attitudes of the people who worked for it and analysed these to identify how the various forms of organisational identity of the Port Authority changed. The researchers held that an organisation's image and identity guide and activate individuals' interpretations of an issue, providing the motivation for its action. Central to this was the belief that organisations respond to their environments by interpreting and acting on issues as they arise (Daft and Weick, 1984; Dutton, 1988).

The issue that the Port Authority was facing was considered a non-traditional and emotionally strategic one. Research into the homeless issue relied on the relationship and understanding that people who worked for the Port Authority understood its issues, identity, image and reputation. Issues are defined as being events, developments and trends that an organisation's members collectively recognise as having consequences for that organisation. An organisation's identity is a centrally enduring, distinct characteristic thereof. An organisation's image is the understanding amongst members of that organisation as to how those from outside the organisation see it. Finally, an organisation's reputation is comprised of the attributes that individuals from outside that organisation ascribe to it.

There is a clear mechanism outlined in this work research that facilitates the investigation into the factors that impact upon change within an organisation. These relate to how the practitioners of that occupation understand how those outside of the practice perceive them. If a poor opinion of the practice is held by those outside of it, then this will lead to a reduction in image for the practitioners, and, ultimately, to change.

There are parallels and similarities in how paper conservation has developed as an occupation. The issues faced by paper conservators could equally be described as non-traditional and emotionally strategic. Paper conservators interpreting and reacting to the issues faced decided that their best option for the development of the occupation was to lay considerable emphasis on professionalising. In doing so, they were reacting to a perception of how paper conservation was, and should be, perceived. The work by Dutton and Dukerick (1991) – using, as it does, many of the tools previously highlighted – provides a template by which paper conservators' motivation for change can be assessed.

Analysing the identity, image and reputational issues faced by paper conservators provides us with a greater understanding of their choices as the discipline emerged as an organised practice. It provides an insight into the motivation of paper conservators – a logic as to how and why their discipline developed when it did. No similar mechanism is available within the field of research into the professions, but by availing of this organisational-change mechanism, the gap in analysis can be bridged.

Paper conservation, when it emerged as an occupation, made strategic choices as to how it would operate as a practice. One of the key choices it made was to organise a representative body that would provide paper conservators with membership rights and support, but also advocacy, to promote the message of conservation on their behalf. It chose to place emphasis on increasing its professionalism as a group. This inextricably linked its organisational development with its professional development, and both need to be explored if a complete understanding of how paper conservation has changed is to be achieved. For the most part, change in conservation seemed to have occurred in small incremental steps (Grundy, 1993; Senior, 2002) and in an iterative way similar to that identified by Coram and Burnes (2001) .

When the development of paper conservation was being researched, the way it changed as an organisation was considered. Clear, distinct change events could be identified from a



review of its development. Eventually, five key change events that occurred in conservation over the period under review were identified. These were of interest because they appeared to be significant in the overall development of paper conservation as a practice, and all appeared to be associated, in some way, with the professionalisation process.

Among the most important change events in the professionalisation of conservation was the convergence of different representative bodies to form one representative body, ICON. This was, by far, the most complex and ambitious change event to date within conservation. It was a highly planned process. Experts in change management were consulted, and a programme was designed to provide members of the various organisations with all the information they needed to make their decision. Convergence was a response, in part, to the criticism levelled at conservators from the wider museum community at a time when the pace of change within museums had increased hugely (Szmelter, 2000). The practice of conservation was criticised for the number of representative bodies that existed, as they made it difficult for state bodies when dealing with the sector. Finally, there was an opinion that being able to advocate in favour of the practice would be a key skill for future representative bodies, and this would be better achieved by one representative body. Convergence was a response to this and all of the other potential issues being faced by conservation.

When the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC) was conceived, and brought into existence, in a planned way, it also developed a traditional professional structure. Both of these developments, however, were in response to external forces in their wider environment. The establishment of the IPC was, in part, in response to the poor representation of conservators within the wider museum sector at the time.

Conservators work, by and large, for museums and galleries, which tend to be bureaucratic in nature. Indeed, the public sector accounts for a large percentage of conservation activity, given the nature of ownership and the collections policy of cultural property in most developed countries. Moreover, the museum sector, in its wider context, has

undergone a period of rapid change, with new roles being demanded of institutions, rapid growth in collections, and growing expectations from the general public.

Coram and Burnes (2001) explain that much of the research into organisational change focuses on the private sector and tends to develop its concepts of change solely from this sector. The rules that apply to organisations operating within the constraints of the private sector are fundamentally different to those operating on the periphery of the public sector. Conservation is one such discipline. Within conservation, there is a strong culture of continuous learning and professional improvement Lester (1999). Senior's (2002) broad-brush approach to change is not only recognised as being a reality within conservation, but it is anticipated. Disaster planning is part of conservation practice and a recognised reality. At a micro level, disasters, when they occur within individual collections, bring about the type of change detailed in Senior's description (Baer and Slate, 1989).

At a macro level, change is influenced by many various stakeholders. Materials' manufacturers, the wider museum sector, the art market, and developments in business are just some of the areas that influence the practice of conservation. Change can occur as a result of any one of, or indeed, a combination of these or other factors. The notion that there is no one best way to manage organisational change, or, put differently, that each organisation faces a different environment, with different pressures, provides the most relevant approach to the management of organisational change within conservation. How paper conservators attempted to organise and represent themselves, and the values they espoused, impacted on how conservation developed and changed. Paper conservators have put significant resources into developing their discipline as a profession, without necessarily achieving full professional status. An exploration of the reasons behind this illustrates how paper conservation has changed over the period under review.

## 2.4 Conservation's Professional Development

As previously stated in Chapter One, conservation emerged as a profession at the start of the 1970s, coinciding with the criticism levelled at the trait approach to analysing the professions. Conservation organised itself along a traditional professional trait structure. Its membership identified with the characteristics of the traditional professions and followed a similar structure in an attempt to gain greater recognition for its practice (Lester, 2002).

The first conservation representative body was the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC), which was established in May 1950 and, although an international organisation, based in the United Kingdom (Plenderleith, 1999). The IIC's first priority was to publish its technical studies. It then went on to compile a listing of abstracts as a source of information for its members.

At a national level, it took some time before representative bodies for the different areas of practice were established (see Table 2.4). Once established, the bodies met and began to formulate codes of ethics, promoted research and facilitated the dissemination of knowledge. Publications were launched and conferences organised to encourage contact between the members. The success of the IIC led to regional groups being established. Initially known as the International Institute for Conservation – United Kingdom Group (IIC-UKG), it later became the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation.

**Table 2.4: The Date of Foundation of the Representative Bodies of Conservation and their Membership**

Association of British Picture Restorers	1943
	413
Society of Archivists: Preservation and Conservation Group	1970
	107
Scottish Society of Conservation and Restoration	1975
	159
Institute of Paper Conservation	1976
	423
British Antique Furniture Restorers' Association	1978
	121
(United Kingdom) Institute for Conservation	1979
	704
TOTAL	1,393

Source: Winsor, 1998.

Not all areas of conservation specialisation have developed at the same rate. The conservation profession clearly has not developed in a hierarchical way and aspects of the practice still continue to emerge. In Table 2.4, we can observe a gap of over thirty-five years between the emergence of the British Picture Restorers' group and the (United Kingdom) Institute for Conservation.

The role of conservators have developed along a continuum, from specialist cleaners through recognised apprenticeship training, to full academic qualification and, finally, to the conservation specialist within their chosen area. By contrast, some sectors remain populated by individuals who can best be described as ‘specialist cleaners’. Certain aspects of the practice, such as stained-glass and furniture conservation, are at an early stage of organising as a profession, while others are far more advanced.

Abbot’s (1988) research into the development of a profession is considered to have implications when trying to ascertain the nature of conservation’s development. This development closely follows that outlined by the trait approach, bringing into question the nature of the ‘professional project’ for conservation.

Although it has not achieved full professional recognition, conservation has been striving for professional recognition since the 1970s. The trait approach remains predominant, even to the present day, defining the development of a profession as a series of discrete, sequential, cumulative, definable steps. It appears to have been the predominant approach to the professionalism of conservation during the period under review.

Paper conservation (and conservation in general) was establishing itself during Stages 2 and 3 of the development of the professions outlined above. It was not until the mid-1990s that we can begin to see the process of conservation professionalism, outside of a traditional trait professional model, receiving any serious critical consideration. This coincides with attempts to develop and implement an accreditation process by which conservators could be judged. Even though it can be criticised for not attaining full professional status, conservation still maintains a direct relationship with both the state and the general public. It is charged by the state to care for its collections, but, simultaneously, it has a responsibility to the public, to ensure that such collections are being looked after.

Although not the only collector within a country, the state is in the unique position of being responsible for the largest amount of cultural material, hence, it is the biggest user of conservation skills. It establishes and finances academic courses, and so controls access to the profession. Finally, the state is the biggest single employer of conservators, and it is almost exclusively responsible for training new entrants to conservation within the United Kingdom. Conservation goes further in stating in many of its codes of conduct that its responsibility extends to the public of today and the future. Too close a relationship with the state can have a bearing on conservation's ability to be independent and, thus, on its ability to execute its responsibility.

The first conservation training course in the United Kingdom was organised by the Institute of Archaeology in 1954. The one-year certified course (extended to two years in 1957) was aimed at providing formal training to those working in the preservation of archaeological objects. The training process has followed a strong academic model, leading to some criticism about the demise of hand skills from within the sector. Such skills were the strong suits of the previous/traditional apprentice training, and the move to a more academic model of training has led to complaints about a reduction in these hand skills (Von Imhoff, 2009; Davey, 2007). The qualifications offered began with certificates and diplomas, but courses became more sophisticated, and degrees, MAs and PhDs were subsequently added to the potential awards that conservators could achieve. There has been considerable pressure from some European-based bodies to standardise academic qualifications for conservation across the European Union, with the recommended entry level being a master's degree. However, this remains aspirational, and no agreement has been reached on this proposal to date.

Evaluative research was a key element of the training process in paper-conservation courses. This filtered into the workplace when the graduates qualified and secured employment. Roy (1997) notes that educators were dealing with the notion of hands-on or minds-on training in relation to the most appropriate type for emerging conservators.

## 2.5 Paper Conservation and Professionalism

From the outset, the IPC put great emphasis on professionalism. The first sentence in its first newsletter stated, 'For a considerable time, paper conservators in the United Kingdom have felt the need for an organisation to increase the professional awareness of the contemporary conservation situation (*PCN*, 1976).' When the Paper Conservation Group seceded from the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation in 1976, it followed the trait professional model very closely. It formed its own representative association, the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC), produced its own peer-reviewed publication, *The IPC Journal*, developed its own code of conduct, organised conferences and produced its own newsletter. The journal, a former juried publication, publishes research articles by its members.

Kavanagh (1994) notes some of the reasons why a museum's workforce complies with the notion of professionalism. He observes that there is a high degree of specialist knowledge developed by each worker and a high degree of training prior to entry, in service, and at the post-graduate level. There is considerable personal commitment to the ideals of the museum and a strong sense of public duty. More recently, there has been a willingness to monitor standards, and, finally, peer-group control is exercised throughout the museum sector. These values also hold true for paper conservation, and it can be argued that they are stronger because of its highly technical, specialist nature.

Furthermore, there is evidence that, by emphasising their professionalism, paper conservators were strategically using it to garner greater recognition/acceptance of their practice and further their own aims by imposing their philosophy of intervention over others treating sensitive paper-based cultural material, and other key allied professions within the museum sector.

From the outset, paper conservation put much emphasis on the need for developing a greater knowledge of its discipline. Its publications, research, conferences and workshops

all had the aim of developing a wider understanding of paper conservation and of promoting this approach. Paper conservation partnered with other organisations for joint conferences to strengthen its appeal. The development of an effective knowledge base was seen as critical to the development of a profession, through all its phases.

The first academic-based training course in paper conservation dates to the establishment of the Conservation of Archival Materials BA course in Camberwell College of Arts in 1969. As a profession, paper conservation was dependent on the state to sponsor courses such as this one. Although never under the direct control of the profession, paper conservation has influenced the curriculum of these courses, and, more importantly, it has been highly critical of training courses that do not conform to an acceptable standard. This displays a degree of control over those entering the sector – a key trait of a profession.

Once formed, the practice of paper conservation went through a period of establishment. It was slow to develop as a profession, and there were difficulties and barriers to its formation. The Conservation Unit was set up as part of the Museums and Galleries Commission, a state-funded body established to aid the development of museums. The Conservation Unit intervened to assist with the development of the conservation sector, and paper conservation benefitted from this directly. The accreditation of paper conservators, organised, as they were, by the representative body, was a clear move on their part to provide further assurance to the general public of the merits of a conservation approach.

Over the period under review, the practice of paper conservation emerged and formed as a distinct discipline. It became established as the philosophy of intervention for preserving works of art on paper, paper-based archival material and books, within the museum sector and with the general public alike. As it formed, the notion of what it meant to be a profession also evolved. The nature of a profession transforms itself in response to the changing environment that it experiences. As paper conservation reaches the end of its emergent phase and matures, it is timely and beneficial to compare its evolution with that



of our understanding of a profession. Given that it has placed such emphasis on its professionalism, such an evaluation is both valuable and appropriate.

Ultimately, what is of key interest in the examination of how paper conservation developed as a profession is the motivation that drove such development. Kavanagh (1994) emphasises that professionalism within the museum sector was driven by a commitment to the ideals of the museums and by a sense of civic duty. How did this impact on how paper conservation developed? Understanding the motivation of the individuals involved with its key developments is critical to understanding the logic of paper conservation's development as a profession.

## 2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

Political influence on the development of conservation has been twofold. Firstly, there was an aim to promote conservation over restoration, and this was taken up by individuals and organisations, both nationally and abroad. The second area of political influence related to the government's need to have effective conservation skills available to conserve the collections in its care. The government intervened to train conservators, whom it then went on to employ, to ensure that it had the skills available to treat its collections (Plenderleith, 1999; Winsor, 2001).

The objective of this research was to determine the organisation of conservators. Conservation can be considered an industry, wherein 'the aggregate of work, scholarship, and ancillary activity in a particular field, [is] often named after its principal subject' (*Collins English Dictionary*, 2009). As a practice, conservation employs in excess of three thousand people. Considerable research and scholarship have been demonstrated over the past thirty years, since its inception, and there are, from what we have seen, many ancillary services attached to the field. What is notable is that conservation has little collective impression of itself, probably because of the fractured nature of the occupation.

The role of professionalism in conservation was examined. This was found to be the single most important motivator of change, as highlighted by the literature review. Noted by Davis as being a coming together of like-minded individuals to bring about improvement, it is a cooperative exercise, described as ‘individuals sharing an occupation voluntarily, organised to earn a living by serving some moral ideal in a moral, permissible way beyond what law, market and ordinary morality require’ (Davis, 2005).

The theory relating to organisational development and change, if applied to the development of paper conservation, has implications for interpreting the nature and motivation of conservation to professionalise. The research conducted by Daft and Weick (1984) and Milliken (1990) can be used to ascertain how paper conservators have responded to their environment. How they responded to issues that they faced will be assessed. Furthermore, the organisation’s identity and its ability to interpret and take action will be analysed. The work of Jackson and Dutton (1988) can be consulted to see how issues within paper conservation were transformed into opportunities. This analysis should provide greater insight into how paper conservation developed as a profession, informing us about its motivation to professionalise.

Driven primarily by paper conservation’s members, the impact of banding together for gain (in terms of members’ abilities to treat objects and for greater recognition of the need for such skills) has been immense. The professionalisation of conservation has facilitated the demise of restoration. What became obvious from an early stage of the review of change in conservation was that the one area that best encapsulated such change was the professionalisation process, which directly corresponded with the first two objectives of the research.

The professionalisation of paper conservation has been shown to closely follow the trait model. This can be seen in the way in which it organised representative groups, the development of its educational system, how it developed and exchanged its knowledge, and, finally, the degree of altruism that was attached to conservation as a practice.

Paper conservation within the United Kingdom also began to develop as a profession, and this is reflected in the implementation of the accreditation process. Paper conservation succeeded in establishing its accreditation system towards the end of the 1990s. The purpose of this was to protect the clients, who wanted to use the services of a conservator, and to enhance the professionalism of conservation (Buchanan, 2001).

The goal of all professions, to be fully autonomous, has, however, eluded conservation. This begs the question: what purpose did its continuous emphasis on professionalisation serve? As a greater understanding of the evolution and complexity of a profession is revealed through ongoing research, and as paper conservation evolves, how closely does it resemble in structure the emerging understanding of a profession? This research will further explore whether the problem of autonomy is simply rhetoric, or if the status of true professional autonomy can ever be secured.

The role played by the government was identified as being central to the development of conservation over the period under review. A profession has a relationship with both the government and the general public. Trust is conferred upon the profession – that it will act for the common good – and, in return, the government gives it the right to regulate itself. In the case of conservation, however, the government is both owner and custodian of the largest collections within the state. It is also the largest employer of conservators, and their biggest trainer and educator. This research highlights the fact that the role of the government is central to conservation's overall independence.

Subsequently, the independence of the professions was further researched. Witz (1992) stated, 'A key element of any professional project is the attempt to gain control over the education, training and practice of an occupational group, the members of that occupation themselves, thus securing a link between education and occupation.'

There is a direct input from practitioners into established training courses. The opinion of conservators is regularly canvassed in formal and informal ways, and best illustrated by Northumbria University's development of a preventative-conservation master's course, in response to a perceived need from conservators working in museums. Prior to this, the focus was primarily on training conservators to work at a bench, conserving objects, when, clearly, the demand within museums was for a specific set of skills to deal with the growing collections-management area (Bacon, 2007).

A complete level of control only comes about when the profession is seen as responsible and independent. Michael Davis maintained that the difference between engineering and a profession was its code of ethics. This is true of an established profession: before it reaches that point, it must be seen to be credible.

In 'The Soul of Professionalism', the last chapter in Freidson's *Professionalism, The Third Logic*, the author sums up professional independence as 'being the ideology that claims the right, even the obligation, of professionals to be independent of those who empower them legally and provide them with their living'. He notes that criticism of the professions from the late 1960s was not without justification. There was a need to make them more honest and accountable. The independence of a profession gives it the right to judge the demands of employers, patrons, or the laws of the state, and to criticise or refuse to obey them. This refusal is not on personal, but professional, grounds. Finally, the author notes that a certain 'transcendent value' gives meaning to a profession, rather than a specialist body of knowledge (Freidson, 2001).

This is the logical conclusion of Freidson's point as it relates to conservation: to be accepted wholly as a profession, it is not sufficient for paper conservation to simply maintain a body of knowledge it must act on it. It must be seen to act in defence of its area of specialism while acting in defence of the values it espouses. It needs to be able to attain its own independence and to maintain this as it develops. Collectively Freidson describes this as the 'transcendent value' of a profession.

It leads to the following questions. What is the transcendent value that gives meaning to the conservation profession? What is the exact relationship between government and conservation? Finally, can conservation ever be truly independent, or is the notion of professionalism just rhetoric?

## 2.7 Research Questions

The overall proposition at the centre of this research remains: what is the nature of change within conservation over the period 1975–2005? However, three specific questions have arisen from the literature review, addressing gaps in our knowledge.

The first research question is: what is the transcendent value of the conservation profession? Freidson (2001) regards a transcendent value as the essence of a profession. The literature review has highlighted the importance of professionalisation during this period. Values appear to be central to change within conservation and, as a result, deserve to be investigated further.

The second research question is: what is the relationship between government and conservation, and how does it account for changes in conservation? The relationship between this stakeholder and conservators is central to how conservation has been financed, organised and located, and the impact these factors have had on its development in the period under review needs to be further investigated.

The final question is: how has the professionalisation of conservation impacted on practice? The two are not exclusive, and the impact of the professional process on practice should be analysed for its contribution to changes in conservation.

The theory of professionalism provides insight into the manner by which the practice of paper conservation developed as a profession. The next chapter will propose a methodology and methods in which to answer these research questions.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research project is to gain a greater understanding of the change process that takes place within the practice of conservation, and to formulate a model for change that supports this. The literature review of conservation to date has highlighted three research questions that reflect this change. Consequently, the research design must maintain a clear focus on the research questions, and this should assist in identifying the best strategy for obtaining the necessary data and information (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999).

Much of the initial work on this project concentrated on defining and limiting the scope of the research. Conservation and restoration takes place, in some form, in almost every country around the world. The materials used are geographically and culturally specific. Cultural objects can range in size, from tiny miniature portrait paintings to large buildings many hundreds of years old, from postage stamps to Neolithic archaeological creations like Stonehenge. From this wide canvas, it was decided to investigate how paper conservation had changed between 1975 and 2005.

The scope illustrates the boundaries of the research – its outer limits – but it also requires a method of investigation that will suit the nature of the research questions. The process of research has been described as a movement from the unknown to the known, and it has significance for all aspects of society.

Creswell notes that it is important to determine the general orientation of the research being undertaken. This approach has been variously described as a worldview (Creswell, 2009), paradigms (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), or broadly conceived research methodologies (Neuman, 2000). There are four different choices of world view, namely post-positivism,

constructivism, pragmatism and advocacy/participatory. All were examined to consider their relevance to the aims and objectives of the research project and the research questions.

Postpositive research is a deterministic philosophy and it attempts to understand everything that occurs within a system. Its intention as a research method is to reduce the ideas of the research into small discrete steps which can be scientific tested. The advocacy or participatory worldview holds that the research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and the political agenda. It contains an action agenda, in that it aims, in part, to change the lives of participants. Underpinning this approach is the belief that traditional forms of research do not fit the marginalised in our society, and that issues relating to social justice need to be addressed. This philosophical worldview focuses on the needs of marginalised and disenfranchised groups and individuals in society, and it includes such approaches to research as the feminist perspective, radicalised discourse, critical theory, queer theory and disability theory (Creswell, 2009).

The pragmatic worldview arises out of actions, situations and consequences, rather than what has come or happened before. It is primarily the philosophical underpinning of the mixed-method study, and it focuses on solutions to a problem. Instead of focusing on methods, researchers focus on the problem and use every available method to determine a solution thereto. The choice of method(s) is at the discretion of the individual researcher (Creswell, 2009). These world views were rejected in favour of a social constructivism approach.

Social constructivism was considered the most appropriate approach to investigate the topic under consideration. A social-constructivist worldview assumes that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work. The goal of this research approach is to rely on, as much as possible, the participant's view of the situation being studied. These are commonly subjective meanings arising from social interaction between people. This approach often focuses on the context in which the interaction takes place, to better



understand the history or culture relating to the research question. The researcher's intent is to make sense of the meanings that others have about the world (Creswell, 2009).

This research project has been undertaken to generate a greater understanding of the practice of conservation. It attempts to discover changes in the theory and practice of conservation through the meanings and beliefs that are important to conservators. Conservation has evolved into a practice that relies on science to interpret problems, while it remains an occupation that deals with various creative processes. This has led to a tension between those who understand and appreciate the skill sets needed to preserve such unique objects, and those who rely on science to problem-solve within conservation. Conservators' daily practice and beliefs may seem mundane, but, by articulating them, one may gain an insight into the profession. Actions are not governed by discrete patterns of cause and effect, as with positive research, but by rules that the social actors use to interpret the world (Punch, 2006; Creswell, 2009).

### **3.2 Social-Constructivist Research Paradigm**

The research paradigm considered relevant to the current project is social constructivism. Constructivism is an approach that maintains that all knowledge comes from human experience, rather than being self-evident. Similarly, a social-constructivist approach holds that knowledge is created by way of social relationships and interactions.

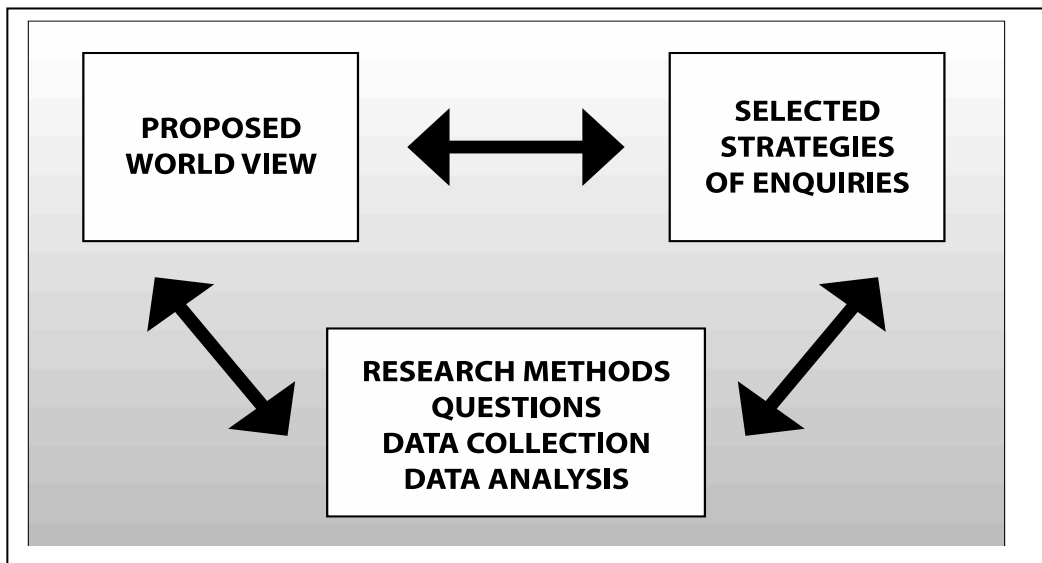
Social-constructivist concepts may appear natural to those who accept them but, in fact, such concepts are a product of the culture to which they belong. Subjective meanings of their lives and work experience are developed because of subjective meanings of their experience. The meaning we are attempting to define in this study is how change has occurred over a specific time frame, and how it is defined by the participants involved and the context in which it has occurred.

The goal of social constructivism is to rely on, as much as possible, the experience of participants and their own views about the research questions. It holds that meaning is constructed through human experience of the world, and that understanding is collected by researchers asking open-ended questions. They engage with the world and make sense of it because of their historical and social perspectives. Both of these perspectives are culturally based, so researchers need to investigate the context and personal information relating to the information collected. The process is inductive, and the researcher generates meaning from the data collected. Conservators make sense of this change based on their historic and social perspectives, so it is important that research into the changing nature of conservation takes cognisance of this. For Creswell (2009, p9), 'Generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with the human community'

The meaning of change within conservation is a result of human interaction, and this approach informs the research. The focus of the research is on the participants – in this case, the conservators, their views on how conservation has changed, and how they interpret this change. The changing context of conservation is an important element of the research, as it provides a deeper understanding of the factors causing change, enabling us to better understand the historical and cultural experience of conservators themselves.

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Figure 3.1: A Framework for Design



Source: Creswell, 2009.

In Figure 3.1, Creswell illustrates the relationship that exists between the three separate parts of the research process, namely the overall research ‘worldview’, the related strategies, and the subsequent research methods. The strategies and the resulting methods of data collection and analysis is related to the overall world view chosen. The research strategies relied upon by social constructivism investigation are qualitative. Qualitative research aims to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons opinions and motivations held by people involved in the research question. It attempts to uncover trends and opinions and allows for an in-depth exploration of a research question under investigation. It includes methods such as focus groups, individual interviews and participatory, observational investigations.

Social constructivism recognises the place of the researcher as being part of the research. It regards the interaction being investigated as being complicated, unpredictable and complex, and this can negate the use of pre-planned strategies. The researcher is something of a jack of all trades, and s/he is expected to extend social constructivism to the research methods employed. Understanding the topic to be investigated is considered an advantage, as the complex meanings that people attach to a subject are better

understood, but, in research, it is always good to maintain a degree of distance from the subject.

A degree of distance is maintained by the fact that the author of this thesis, although a conservator, is not based within the United Kingdom. He can observe the developments that have taken place within this region and interpret the information collected, but from a detached point of view. Having a working understanding of conservation is invaluable to this research. Conservation, as a practice, is a hybrid of different disciplines, scientific enquiry, materials technology, practical hand skills, and art appreciation. It has its own values, culture and nuances as a profession, and a practising conservator has a greater insight into these.

The author had practically no direct contact with the participants interviewed. This research intends to make sense of the meaning that others have of the world, or, in this case, the conservation section of the world. Thus, it is interpretive in nature (Creswell, 2009).

### **3.3 Research Design**

As we saw in Figure 3.1, the research design depends on the choice of worldview, which then dictates the strategy, which, in turn, determines the research methods adopted.

The choice of research methods available to all researchers can be classed as qualitative, quantitative or some combination of both. Punch (2006) notes that there are four main points to consider when deciding on the appropriate method:

1. Clearly define the research question to be investigated.
2. As far as possible, let the research question dictate the nature of the data collected.
3. Measure if it is feasible or relevant to do so.

4. Use qualitative or quantitative approaches or a combination of both, where appropriate.

The literature review has led the author to adopt a social constructivist world view and it follows from this that a qualitative research strategy was favoured over a quantitative intervention. Qualitative researchers attempt to identify the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of the participants. At its core, qualitative research attempts to understand a culture-sharing group and how it develops patterns of behaviour over time. In this instance, the culture-sharing group is made up of conservators, and the patterns of behaviour are how it changed and the factors that led to that change.

Qualitative research enables a broad explanation of behaviour and attitudes to be determined. In some studies, the theory becomes the end point. This method of investigation is particularly suited to social and human problems. It attempts to secure meaning and understanding from participants about the research question under investigation. This process is inductive in that broad themes emerge to form a generalised model or theory. The attitudes of individuals are researched, the data is collected and analysed, and a theory is formed from this data analysis.

In attempting to determine how the practice of conservation has changed, a qualitative approach was favoured, for a number of other reasons. Little if any research has been previously undertaken into how conservation has changed. There has been some research on the potential impact of change on the museum sector, but none of it has examined the impact on conservation. Where little previous research has taken place into a phenomenon, qualitative research methods are recommended (Creswell, 2009).

Although it has been possible to identify the major change events within conservation from the literature review, there is little understanding of the motivation of the individual conservators involved therein. Again, qualitative methods are recommended here. Because so little is known about the nature of change within conservation, it is impossible to understand the theory underpinning it. Qualitative research methods offer greater potential

to understand why conservation has changed in the manner in which it has ( Punch, 2006; Creswell, 2009).

It was proposed to approach individual conservators within a work, rather than an experimental, setting. The data was collected from participants by interview, that is, by directly talking to them, collecting their responses and observing their reactions. This provided a unique insight into the attitudes of paper conservators towards changes within their occupation, and it should generate a valuable understanding of the changes that have occurred in the sector.

### **3.4 Research Strategy and Methodology**

The research strategy is the reasoning or set of ideas by which the research study intends to proceed. It is the logic or reasoning at its centre. For this investigation, strategic qualitative options were chosen (Punch, 2006). There are five main methods available to qualitative researchers: observation, interview, ethnographic fieldwork, discourse analysis and textural analysis (Travers, 2002).

It was proposed to use interview techniques, in particular, as a case-study analysis. Case study was chosen as a method because the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context (Yin, 2006). It was not possible, using other methods available, to fully identify the nature of change in conservation from its context. The case-study method is considered the best fit solution for this research paradigm.

A full literature review of conservation publications of the period was undertaken. Following on from this, metadata interviews were conducted with several different paper conservators, to determine the context of the change that had taken place over the period under review. These were loose, open-ended discussions conducted with individuals who

had knowledge of the change events, but who were not directly involved with the events themselves.

Those interviewed were experienced conservators, chosen because of their knowledge of the ways in which conservation had developed. The purpose of interviewing them was to discover the important change events that occurred in paper conservation over the time frame under review, and to secure some context for these changes. These interviews had the effect of providing greater insight into the changes that occurred, which better informed the interview questions. For example, they highlighted the depth of feeling on both sides of the argument, in favour of and against the convergence process. This foreknowledge allowed for a careful construction of the questions relating to the case studies, so that a fair impression of the opinion(s) on each side could be captured.

### **3.5 Research Ethics**

It is important to consider the ethical issues that may arise at any point throughout the duration of the project. They can arise at the planning stage, during data collection, or, indeed, during data analysis and interpretation (Creswell 2008). Being aware of potential ethical difficulties can prevent them from occurring, forestalling any difficulties that may arise during the project. As Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013) succinctly advised, it is important that the research project does no harm. It is incumbent on the researcher to ensure that this does not happen.

An ethical approach to research revolves around consideration of the correct way to undertake the different stages and ensuring that this consideration is maintained throughout the entire project. Those new to research may have difficulty foreseeing ethical difficulties or potential conflicts therein. Careful consideration of the ethical issues associated with the research project, as well as an exploration of its potential problems, will ensure that they are properly addressed (Punch 2006).

A research project needs to be worthwhile, and the questions being investigated must benefit others. Otherwise, it is an unwise and wasteful use of resources. The worthiness of the project relates to the contribution that the research is likely to make to the area in which it is involved. It is also necessary to be able to convey the purpose of the study to its participants. Any difference between the purpose understood by the researcher and the purpose understood by the participants can lead to misunderstanding or deception. Confusion between the researcher's intent and the participants' understanding of the project will lead to poor data collection (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Researchers need to build up trust with their participants, and being open about the aims and objectives of the project builds confidence between them. The researcher needs to protect participants from any potential impropriety while ensuring that his/her project is of the highest integrity, guarding against anything that may bring the project, the researcher him/herself, or the sponsoring institution into disrepute. Poor research ethics will not only lead to dispute and conflict, but poor data collection, which will have an impact on the overall findings.

To undertake a research project, a set of skills is required. Novice researchers will inevitably make mistakes, and it is the responsibility of their supervisors to ensure that these are kept to a minimum. However, the researchers themselves must be content that their skill sets enable them to be competent. The researcher must consider the nature of the population being investigated. Special consideration should be given to the needs of vulnerable individuals, such as minors, persons with intellectual impairments, and victims (Frick 2009).

It is necessary to ensure that the individuals being interviewed are the most appropriate people to answer the research questions under review. If they are, then it is also necessary to have them freely consent to participate in the project. They need to be competent, in order to give the information that the researcher seeks. While their consent should be given freely, the researcher needs to ensure that the participants' privacy is not infringed upon in any way, while it is also vital that they should not be deceived in any way.



The purpose of a consent form is to recognise that the participants in the research project have rights, and that these will be protected during the data-collection process. It should contain clear information about the critical aspects of the research process, namely the name of the researcher(s), their full contact details, the sponsoring institution, the purpose of the research, the benefits of participating, the risks faced by participants, and their contact information, should questions arise. Confidentiality in participating should be guaranteed to the individuals and clearly detailed on the consent form. Once these conditions have been communicated to the participant, then s/he and the researcher(s) sign and countersign the consent form, with copies held by both parties (Miles and Huberman 1994, Creswell 2008).

The consent form can also address what happens to the data once collected. It could inform the participant as to how the collected data will be anonymised and the length of time for which it will be held. The participant could be asked to determine what happens to the data once the project is finalised, and s/he could be given the right to embargo public access to the information for a period of time, should s/he wish to do so. It may be necessary to check the validity of the information collected, and specific strategies can be employed to ensure that this is achieved. The accuracy of the data collected needs to be checked, and researchers may return to participants in a clear and controlled way to achieve this aim (Miles and Huberman 1994).

A consent form was given to each participant in this research project, and a copy of the form is contained in Appendix 1. It was signed by both the researcher and the participant prior to the interview taking place. Prior to this, telephone contact was made with each participant to introduce the researcher and the topic. This was followed by an email that explained the project in full, detailing the participant's involvement and politely requesting that s/he consider partaking in the project. Once the consent form had been signed by both parties, and prior to the interview taking place, further reassurance was offered to the participant to put him/her at ease and allay any concerns. Once the interview had taken place, it was accurately transcribed, and the transcript returned to each

participant for comment. This strategy was adopted for two reasons: firstly, to ensure the accuracy of the data collected; and, secondly, to ensure that each participant was comfortable with all that s/he had said during the interview (Creswell 2008).

Consideration should be given to how the collected data will be protected. How private the data and information collected needs to be, and the three areas of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were proposed by Punch (2006) as being central to providing the data with the necessary protection.

The ownership of the collected data should also be considered. Generally, it is held to be owned by the researcher. The confidentiality agreement needs to consider who has access to the data, and implied in this is the notion that the researcher will protect and control access.

It is incumbent on the researcher to constantly question the integrity of the research that s/he is undertaking. The study needs to be conducted correctly and comply with acceptable practice or a set of standards for similar research. Quality is something that has implications for all aspects of the research, from the initial planning and data collection to the final analysis and write-up of findings. Suitable planning and constant reviewing of the data-collection process will ensure greater accuracy therein. Similarly, sloppy data analysis or the improper reporting of findings will have a negative impact on the quality of the final research project.

Ethical issues are also present throughout the writing and dissemination stages. The suppression, falsification or invention of findings to satisfy the needs of the researcher or his/her audience is both unethical and fraudulent. Dealing with ethical issues is less about the application of foolproof rules and more about being aware of potential problems, making trade-offs and negotiating.

### **3.6 Case-Study Methodology**

A case study is a report about a person, group or situation that has been studied. It is a documented study of a specific real-life situation or an imagined scenario. Case studies, bound by time and activity, can be useful when trying to understand how the various elements of an event fit together.

Case studies are the preferred form when trying to gain insight into ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon, as it relates to the individual, group or organisation. The case-study methodology sheds light on complex social phenomena. According to Yin (2006) it, ‘allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of the real-life events – such as individual life cycles, organisational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations and the maturation of industries’.

There is a core to the case study, a somewhat intermediate boundary, which defines what will or will not be studied. The boundary of the case study is further restricted once sampling begins. However, initially it should be aspirational and all-encompassing of the problem to be investigated. Case studies usually have further, smaller cases, or sub-cases, embedded within them.

Punch (2006) describes a case study as being a research strategy that focuses on the in-depth, holistic and in-context study of one or more cases. Creswell (2009) also notes that case studies are qualitative strategies in which the researcher explores, in depth, a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Researchers collect data using a variety of different sources over time. A well-designed case study will build up a rich picture from many different levels, and the task is fundamentally theoretical, in order to prevent it from becoming an engaging story (DaVaus, 2006).

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013) have noted that single cases can be ‘very vivid and illuminating’, especially if they have been chosen to be revelatory. The purpose of each case study is to identify the logic of the change in each instance, the motivation of the individuals, and the reasoning behind the change. The context of the change and gathering information about the choices that people made around the process is central to understanding the change itself. In this instance, meaning is generated out of social interaction, which is concurrent with a socialist-constructivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009).

Case studies are widely used in a number of academic disciplines. Information is gathered and analysed about a large number of features within a research topic, but the investigation itself involves a much smaller number of cases (Gomm et al., 2000). Typically, one or more cases are used. There has been criticism over the inaccuracy of using only one case study, and multiple cases are recommended for greater accuracy (Yin, 1993).

A multiple case-study approach is favoured in this instance because it allows for observations of the same phenomenon across the development of conservation over the time line of the research. Multiple case studies focusing on one topic provide the researcher with greater potential for a deeper understanding of his subject. A common pattern/theme relating to the questions and the overall aims of the research should be discernible across all case studies. When using multiple case studies, each one is regarded as a single case, with the findings of each contributing to a greater understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. By examining similar and contrasting case studies, the overall validity, precision and stability of the findings is strengthened (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Case-study methodology has been chosen for this research because it has the capacity, as a research method, to provide an understanding of complex issues and extend the experience of, and add strength to, what is already known about an issue through previous research. As a method, it has been criticised because it offers, in some instances, few grounds for the reliability and generality of the findings. Yet, it is used extensively by social scientists,

as it provides insight into contemporary, real-life situations. They are particularly useful in investigating a phenomenon when it is not readily distinguishable from its context. Multiple sources of evidence, as provided by the case-study method, combined with other sources, provide both clarity and validity.

The research questions are best served by the case-study methodology because the richness of the subject means that the study is likely to have more variables than data points. This richness means that the study cannot rely on a single data point, and, rather, will rely on multiple data sources for analysis. Yin's model for case-study construction is outlined in Table 3.5, as follows.

**Table 3.5: Five-Stage Model for Case-Study Research Design**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The case question</li><li>2. Its propositions, if any – something that should be examined within the scope of the study</li><li>3. Its unit of analysis, which generally relates to the title</li><li>4. The logic linking the data to the proposition</li><li>5. The criteria for interpreting the findings</li></ol> |
|---|

Source: Yin, 1993.

The pattern of change discernible in one case study should be replicated throughout all the case studies. The various/different patterns should be evident in the findings. Similarities across all cases should help identify the common factors that impact change. The case studies have been identified as a result of an extensive literature review, which highlighted the five key change events that occurred within conservation over the time period under review. A case-study approach should enable a greater understanding of these five change events achieved within conservation.

The central point of the case-study research is the question to be addressed. In this instance, it is how paper conservation has changed over a specific time frame. Once

decided, the unit to be studied follows on from this. The unit of analysis is the central point of the case study, from which the patterns of data and information collected can be extracted. Once the unit has been decided, Yin (2006) suggests that research propositions be used to limit the information and enquiry to that which is relevant to the topic being investigated.

It was decided that the unit of analysis in this research would be change within paper conservation. All five cases were chosen because they each reflected a key change event. Change was the factor common to all five cases and the central point of each study, and, as such, it was the logical choice as the unit of analysis.

The central factor in each case study is the individual involved and his/her experience of the incident(s) of change. A research proposition limiting the questions to aspects of the change in each case was necessary. Equally, the research proposition needed to take into account the supporters of change and the resisters to that same change. Finally, as has been identified by the investigation into professionalism, the role of the government was central to the provision of conservation over the time frame, and its role in each case study also had to be addressed.

### **3.6.1 Sampling**

Sampling is the part of the research process that enables decision-making about who should be observed or interviewed, as well as the setting, event or social purpose to be investigated. It is the process by which a representative subsection of the overall population is decided upon and selected, where the population is the group of people or events that the researcher wants to research.

Although the sampling selection may change as the research develops, particularly when conducting qualitative research, an initial selection is still necessary. All research needs a starting point, and the initial sampling provides this. Deciding where to look for answers

to a research question can be fraught with difficulty, mainly because groups can be subdivided many times.

A sample can be selected in two different ways: randomly or non-randomly. Random samples are those selected from a population by chance. Non-random samples are those taken from a population selected because of their experience or because they are closely associated with the topic being investigated. The choice of approach depends on the topic being investigated and the structure of the study being undertaken.

Sampling allows for the size of a population to be investigated, to be identified in advance, and the feasibility of collecting data from this group assessed. It is important that the boundaries of the research are set prior to its commencement. These boundaries are those aspects of the case studies that one can study, given the limits of available time and resources. It is important for the sample to be feasible and as relevant as possible to the research questions under review.

The samples to be investigated for this research project were chosen specifically. Key individuals who were involved in the five incidences of change that formed the basis of the five case studies were identified. These individuals were chosen on the basis that they were the instigators of the change events or because they were directly involved in the implementation of the changes. They were identified as a result of the literature review of paper conservation, and as a result of the metadata interviews conducted. All of these individuals were contacted with a written interview request.

### **3.6.2 Piloting**

Piloting refers to a preliminary, small-scale research project conducted prior to the main study. It enables potential mistakes in the main study to be identified at an early stage, and for these to be corrected. It is effectively a mini-version of a full-scale research study. It provides an opportunity to consider the effectiveness of the proposed research and to make

modifications to its design. It also allows for an estimation of the time needed to complete the main project and an estimate of costs to be calculated. It does not guarantee success, but it can increase the likelihood of the research achieving its aims.

Pilot studies are useful in that they help to identify and refine the overall research questions, allowing for the hypothesis, or set of hypotheses, to be tested. They allow for the research questions to be checked and the collection instruments to be assessed. A pilot study can also be useful in identifying any potential problem or difficulty with the research project prior to its full commencement. Piloting, therefore, gives the researcher greater confidence in implementing the full research project than s/he would have had without undertaking the exercise. For all these reasons, piloting is a very useful step in the research process.

A number of conservators who had a degree of involvement with some of the change events were identified and approached. They agreed to be interviewed, and were questioned to check the veracity and relevance of some of the overall research questions. These individuals were all paper conservators who had experience of different aspects of conservation. The piloting of the research did result in changes to the way in which some of the overall research questions were phrased and the order in which they were asked.

### **3.6.3 Questions**

Different types of questions can secure different types of information. The wording of the questions is critically important, and pilot studies should be undertaken by the researcher to ensure suitable questions that reflect the main research question under investigation.

Merriman (1998) and Miles and Huberman (1994) all highlight the value of different types of questions to a research project, namely hypothetical questions, devil's-advocate questions, ideal-position questions, and, finally, interpretive questions. Hypothetical questions are useful in order to determine what the respondent might do in a situation.



Devil's-advocate questions challenge the interviewee to respond to an alternative proposition. Ideal-positioning questions ask an interviewee to describe an ideal situation, and, finally, the interpretive question sums up what has been said and invites a reaction.

An outline of the questionnaire used for the interviews can be found in Appendix One. This also gives a breakdown of the key aims of each question, the type of information that each one was targeting, and the context therein. The purpose of the devised questions was to provide a greater understanding of the various changes that had taken place within conservation – change events upon which the five case studies were based.

Questioning began with an open-ended, general question designed to put respondents at their ease while securing general information about their motivation for choosing a career in conservation. Specific questions were then asked about the particular change event with which the interviewees were involved. Specific questions about the role that the change event played in the professionalisation of conservation were also asked, as was a question to ascertain if there was any role played by the government in the change event.

The two types of questioning open ended, and specific, relates directly to the questions addressed by this research. Some of the questions related directly to the three main research questions outlined at the end of Chapter Two, while the majority were designed to garner a greater understanding of the change event itself. Comprehending why these changes had taken place when they did is one of the key objectives of the research. Background information was collected about the respondents and their motivation for choosing conservation as a career. In all but one case, the respondents had experience of more than one change event. Each was interviewed about the specific change event(s) of which s/he had experience.

Although the interviews were structured, there was leeway to develop a greater understanding about topics addressed by the interviewee as part of the process. Once presented, topics of interest were explored further, with supplementary questions designed

to elicit greater understanding. Valuable insight into each change event was secured because of this process.

Because of the ways in which the interviews developed, it was not always possible to ask questions in the strict order in which they are outlined in Appendix One. Also, because of the nature of paper conservation, each interviewee may have had experience of more than one of the change events being investigated. On occasion, this required deviation from the strict interview structure.

### **3.6.4 Interviews**

It was decided to use interviews as the main data-collection procedure, as is common with the case-study approach. Creswell (2009) advises that purposefully selected sites or individuals be proposed for the study. In this instance, key individuals involved in the changes that have taken place in conservation were proposed and linked to the individual case studies.

Miles and Huberman (1994) identify four elements of interview research that are important when planning interviews: the setting, where the research or interviews will take place; the actors, that is, those to be interviewed; the events, what the actors will be observed doing; and, finally, the process, the nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting. Rubin and Rubin (2005) advised that the research interview is a professional conversation, in that there is an exchange of views between the interviewee and interviewer – a two-person conversation about a theme of mutual interest.

The change process in conservation is historical, and the interview process is a recommended way of collecting information about such occurrences. If it is not possible to observe a participant's behaviour within a change setting, the face-to-face interview is the next-best option.

It was proposed to conduct face-to-face interviews with conservators regarded as being key participants of the change process in conservation, in which they were asked generally open-ended, unstructured questions, designed to elicit their views. The questions had to conform to the research proposition, which, in this instance, was made up of three aims: to discover the nature of the change process, to examine the resistance to change in each instance, and to analyse the role played by government in that change.

One of the key drawbacks of this approach is that the interviewees provide information filtered through their views, and that they are removed from the incidents. There is also the potential for the role of the interviewer to impact on the outcome of the research. As has been mentioned, a secondary source of information needs to be relied upon, in order to triangulate the findings from the interviews. All the cases chosen have available documentary evidence, which can be relied upon for triangulation (Frick, 2009).

There is a balance to be struck within the interview, in that too strict a structure may deny insight into the interviewee's understanding and perception of the question being investigated, and too loose a structure can provide confusion, with divergent viewpoints and seemingly unconnected pieces of information.

Most interviews are positioned along a continuum, from very structured, through semi-structured, to unstructured. The most common, however, are semi-structured interviews, in that there is an interview guide that outlines a set of questions or issues to be explored. The exact wording, or the order in which these questions are asked, is not pre-planned, allowing the interviewer to collect the observations and opinions of the interviewee while limiting the range of responses collected.

Finally, Rubin and Rubin (2005) note that there is a craft to the interview process. A good interview results from the skill and judgement of the interviewer, which, they maintain, is learned through practice. Rules of thumb are derived from practice, and understanding

these is essential to conducting good interviews. They propose a seven-stage model of an interview: thematising the interview, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and finally, reporting the findings.

Eleven semi-structured interviews took place with individuals chosen because of the roles they played in the change events. These interviews took place at locations suggested by the respondents themselves, which were most convenient to them. A consent form was supplied to all interviewees, outlining the aims, purpose and description of the research. It contained a confidentiality clause, noting that transcripts of the interviews, once written, would be supplied to interviewees for their consideration. It further noted that the interviews would be stored anonymously, and that nothing said therein would be published without the interviewees' consent. Finally, the form contained full contact details for the interviewer. A copy thereof is contained in Appendix One.

The interviews were recorded with permission and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Notes were taken during or just after each interview so that the demeanour of the respondent could be recorded.

One interviewee had experience of one change event. Seven respondents were involved with two change events, while three respondents had experience of three change events. Again, a breakdown of the cases to which each interviewee contributed is contained in Appendix One.

### **3.6.5 Coding**

In research, coding is a process whereby chunks of data are coded so that they can easily be identified, retrieved and analysed by researchers. Data is clustered around a theme and a code is applied to that cluster, so that when the data is being reviewed, the key value of

each piece can be compared. Data from interviews, notes, observations or events is coded, depending on the topic to which it relates. Coding is a way in which data can be categorised so that it can be analysed.

There are numerous ways in which data can be clustered and coded. The first level of analysis involves the researcher identifying concepts or themes contained within the collected data. It is a process by which subheadings or second-level topics can be identified. Categories are groups imposed on the coded segments in order to reduce the overall number thereof, grouping them so that patterns within the coded sectors can be identified. Once the codes have been categorised, they can be further analysed to identify themes therein.

Codes will almost always change because of field experience. As the researcher conducts the research, new topics will present themselves, and these will have to be accommodated within the overall coding framework.

Codes should have a structural and conceptual unity. The list of codes normally originates from the conceptual framework, the research questions, the hypothesis, the problem area, and/or the key variables that the researcher considers important. Aspects of the research questions are identified and described. The collected data that references the different aspects of the research questions is easier to gather together once coded. Inductive codes are those that emerge progressively once the data collection has begun.

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend that, when analysing data from interviews, a contact-summary form be compiled, upon which the main themes, issues, problems and questions can be recorded. Themes encountered in the interviews were recorded on the form, and all the interviews relating to each case were evaluated. This evidenced a pattern in the collected data about each case to be determined, identifying themes from the data gathered. When all the themes relating to a particular case study were identified, the data correlated from the interviews was reviewed to determine the popularity of each theme.

This review was conducted by way of creating codes that related to the particular themes identified, and these codes helped identify the themes within each interview. The frequency of the appearance of a particular code was an indication of the support that each theme had from the respondents relating to that case study. This enabled issues relating to the change to be identified, and for a pattern of change to be determined. The codes used are contained within Appendix One.

When this process was completed, a cross-case comparison was made to determine the pattern of change across all five case studies. Again, these were graded depending on the frequency with which they appeared in the data. In some cases, individual themes or one-off items raised by respondents (identified through the data analysis and coding) were deemed by the author as having an importance beyond the frequency with which they appeared in the interviews. These items were regarded as being of such significance to the three case questions being investigated that they were separately itemised. One such instance was when a respondent mentioned that the IPC committee had considered a licensing system akin to that of doctors and architects, but the group dismissed it because of the cost. This had significance because it showed the level of consideration given by the IPC to the notion of professionalising, and this was a key item being investigated by the research.

The themes were also evaluated to determine their relevance to the three research questions under consideration, as outlined in Chapter Two, namely: the transcendent value of conservation, the relationship between conservation and the government, and, finally, the impact of professionalism on practice. The themes and issues identified were organised into a logical sequence, and the case studies written up to illustrate all five separate change events. These were analysed to determine the facts relevant to the research questions under review.

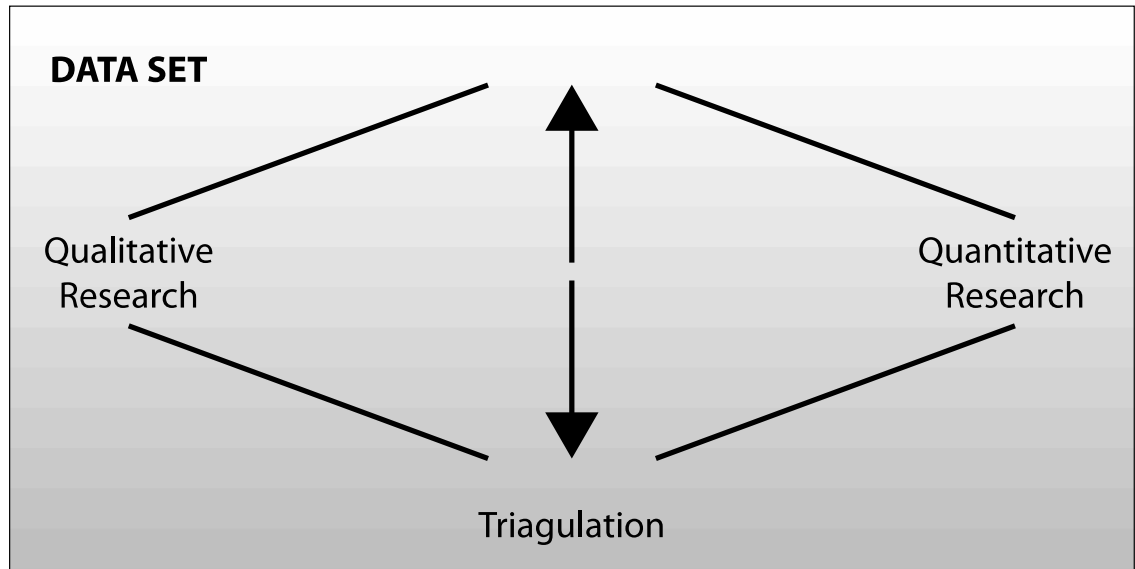
### **3.6.6 Data Sources**

The research into how paper conservation has changed was built up from four different sources. The first was comprised of semi-structured interviews, conducted between 2009 and 2010, with eleven individuals who were involved in the specific change events under investigation, as outlined above. A second source was made up of the minutes from committees of the various organisations associated with the change events. The third source was comprised of publications relating specifically to paper conservation, and generally to conservation, published within the time under review. Finally, examples of the treatment afforded to objects by paper conservation were also considered.

### **3.6.7 Triangulation**

Triangulation is a process that, in the past, has been linked to issues of quality in qualitative research. It is a method that limits the possibility of bias, as it strengthens the hypothesis by using more than one complementary method to test it. It combines a number of methods to achieve security for the hypothesis and a greater, more accurate research outcome. It proposes the use of several kinds of methods or data to study a topic, with the most common type being a study that uses a variety of sources (Punch, 2006; Creswell, 2009).

If a single case is triangulated with a relevant data set, then the patterns highlighted are more reliable and can be compared across all five cases. This is illustrated in Figure 3.5.7, as follows;



**Figure 3.6.7: Levels of Triangulation of Qualitative and Quantitative Design**

Source: Frick, 2009.

Triangulation is a method that attempts to provide greater validity to the qualitative research process. By using more than one method, the researcher can ensure that what is being measured is what is supposed to be measured. The accuracy of the theory that results from an analysis of the data can be determined by the use of a second/complementary method of investigation (Frick, 2009).

There are different forms of triangulation. Data triangulation refers to the use of different sources of data about the same topic, e.g. how people can be assessed, randomly sampled, and/or interact as groups, families or themes, or as part of collectives, organisations or social groups (Frick, 2009). Investigator triangulation involves deploying three separate investigators to observe or conduct interviews, to minimise the bias that might come from an individual conducting the interviews on his/her own. Theory triangulation is recommended if there is a low degree of theoretical coherence in an area being investigated. One might confirm one or more theories by applying them to the data collected and then choose the theory that is most plausible, or develop a separate theory.



The advantage of theory triangulation is that it prevents researchers from sticking to a preliminary assumption.

The most relevant choice of research methods is the triangulation of methods. This is a complex procedure in which each process is evaluated against the other to maximise the validity of field efforts or interviews. This should, if enacted properly, increase the reliability of the procedures. The outcomes from the data gleaned from the interviews are cross-referenced against archival records in an effort to further strengthen them. Denzin observe,s as outlined by Frick (2009,) that the outcome is dependent on the investigator, the research setting, and the theoretical perspective. He considers it a step towards a greater understanding of the topic and the generator of greater knowledge (Frick, 2009). This approach originates from the growing understanding of qualitative research. That there is no one research method, but a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches available to the researcher in this area.

In this research project, each case study under review has related archival materials available, by which triangulation of the findings secured from the interviews can be compared. This is further strengthened by comparison to treatments written up within the literature of paper conservation and conservation in general. By triangulating all three – the interview findings with archival data sources and the conservation treatment of objects – any insights secured from the interviews are strengthened

## **Chapter Four: Case Studies**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The following case studies investigate five distinct change events in the development of paper conservation and the wider conservation community over a thirty-year period, from 1975 to 2005. The five change events were chosen because they were considered significant and warranted attention and further investigation. Although connections between the five cases were evident at the outset, the research established a far more direct connection.

Three of the case studies concern developments within the changing structure of paper conservation, namely the establishment of the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC), the introduction of an accreditation system, and, finally, the process by which five separate conservation-representative bodies, including the IPC, converged into one entity, the Institute of Conservation (ICON). All three case studies concentrate on changes in paper conservation. The remaining two case studies relate to other changes within the wider conservation community, but which had an impact on, and implications for, paper conservation. These were the establishment of the Conservation Unit and the development of the master's programme in preventative conservation, set up within Northumbria University in 2005.

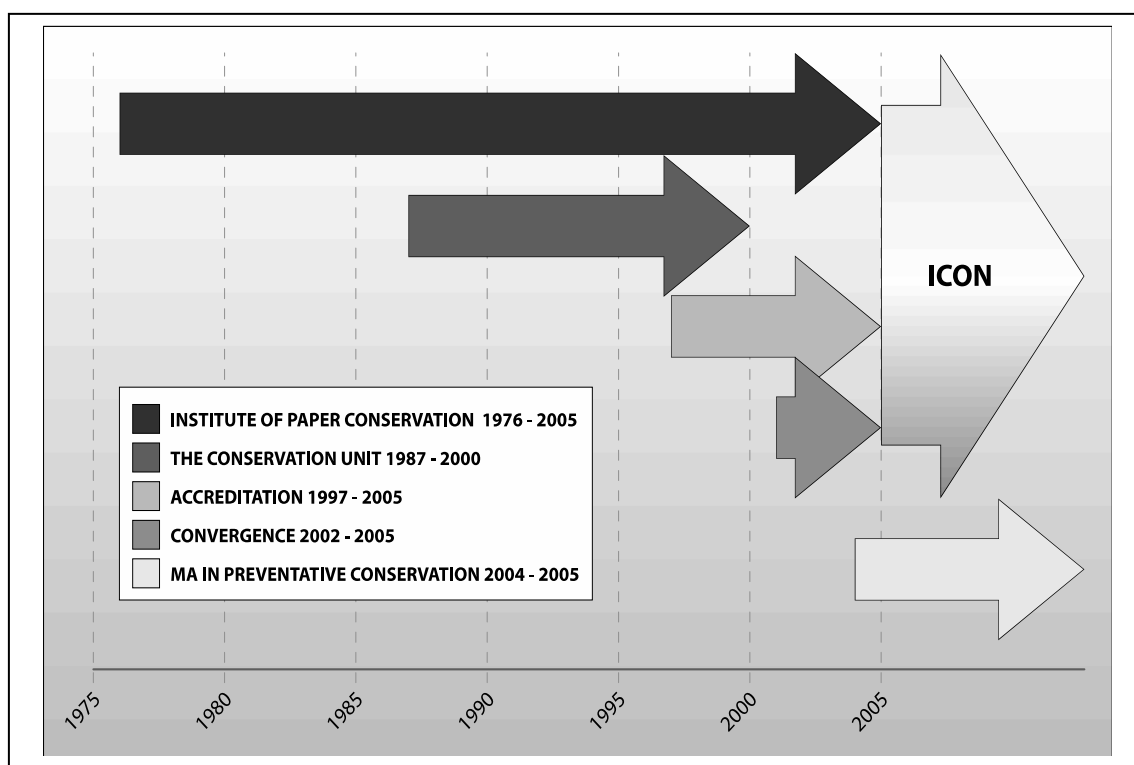
The earliest case study relates to the establishment of the Institute of Paper Conservation in 1976. The second case study deals with the Conservation Unit, which was established in 1987. The last three cases focus on the eight-year period: from 1997 to 2005 when the accreditation process in paper conservation was set up. This including the convergence process, which ran from 2002 to 2005 and finally, to the MA in Preventative Conservation which had its first student intake in 2005.

All eleven interviewees were conservators of considerable experience. Most had started their careers as conservators, but some had branched off into other areas, either in conservation specialisms or other careers. Of the eleven interviewed, four were in private practice, two were full-time lecturers, three were conservation administrators, and one worked for an institution on a full-time basis. One individual not directly connected to conservation – a consultant critically associated with one of the change events – was also interviewed.

At the time of being interviewed, of the eleven individuals involved in conservation, two had retired from the practice, while one was between careers. The remainder were active conservators. All interviewees had been involved with conservation for at least fifteen years, while one had been a practising conservator for fifty years. Six of the individuals were female and five were male.

Of the eleven individuals interviewed for these case studies, the majority had experience of working in other fields. In a number of cases, this experience had a direct impact on their attitudes to the changes that they were championing. The majority of interviewees had experience of conservation outside the United Kingdom. Many had worked in different countries, while others were involved with international committees or European institutions.

The interviews relating to all five case studies were transcribed and coded, and the findings compiled and subsequently analysed. The background of each case study was investigated and outlined. This was considered necessary because the cases spanned a thirty-year time frame, and the background of each provided a context for the change therein. Each change event itself was described and documented, and the key items relating to its development were outlined. The events relating to each case were further analysed and, finally, the findings of all the cases compared. When this was complete an analysis of the common factors, trends and issues relating to all five were evident.



**Figure 4.1: Collective Timeline Diagram of all five case studies**

There were three stated aims at the beginning of this research project. The first was to explore and define the conservation industry, the second was to determine the issues that caused change within conservation, and the third was to produce a model reflecting how conservation has changed in the period under review.

The literature review in Chapter Two led to three key questions: what is the transcendent value or essence of the conservation profession? What is the nature of the relationship between conservation and government, and how does it account for changes within the profession? Finally, how has the professionalisation of conservation impacted on practice?

The information provided by the participant interviews highlighted values and beliefs that were considered important to them as conservators, and also in relation to the development of conservation. These values were identified in coding the transcripts, as outlined in

Chapter Three, and their subsequent analysis attempted to identify the nature of the factors in support of, and against, the change in each case study. These factors were identified and assessed to determine whether they were in response to elements from within or outside conservation. They were classed in terms of their structural, personal or wider-conservation impact. Finally, the literature relating to organisational development was relied upon to determine three factors, the issues, identity's and images that conservators had towards these factors. In each case, these findings were listed as part of the data category within the case study.

According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), individual or personal values are described as being social principles, goals and standards that members of a culture believe have intrinsic worth. Values are standards that we, as individuals, seek to achieve. They are normally lofty ideals, like truthfulness, loyalty or charity. A belief is a more enduring value, and it is something that a person holds to be true. Beliefs are less likely to change. Sometimes they can be strongly held, and these can influence an individual's behaviour and that of the organisation of which s/he is a part.

Individual values concerned with concepts, such as service, quality or efficiency, become reflected in the organisation as a whole when other members hold similar values. Beliefs, if shared with others within the organisation, can hold true for that organisation. The organisation's values and beliefs are a collection of the individual values and beliefs held by its members.

How others see an organisation, the character judgements made on it by outsiders, is mentioned by Alvesson (1990) as being the organisation's image. Identity is described as being the centrally enduring, distinct characteristics of an organisation (Albert and Whetten, 1985). The image and identity of an organisation is formed from the values and beliefs held by the collective of individuals within that organisation. An individual's sense of self is connected, in part, to the organisation's image, in that if the image deteriorates, it impacts on the individuals associated with that organisation.

Dutton and Dukerich (1991) noted that the relationship between an individual's sense of self and his/her sense of organisational identity is a very personal connection between an organisation's action and individual motivation. Alvesson (1990) noted that organisational members monitor and evaluate actions because those outside the organisation use these actions to make character judgements about it.

Determining an organisation's image and identity is central to understanding how issues are perceived and acted upon within it. In each case study, the pertinent issues were identified and highlighted. By analysing the change within each, in both image and identity, we are provided with a valuable insight into how and why these issues arose and the reasoning behind the actions taken to resolve them.

## 4.2 The Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC)

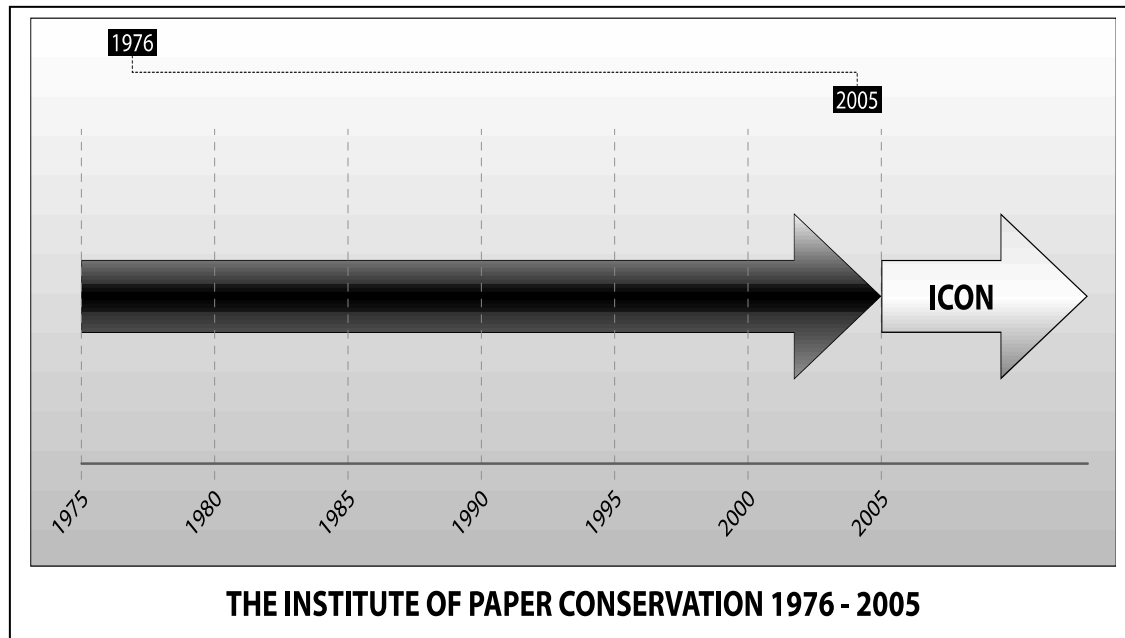


Figure 4.2: Timeline for the Institute of Paper Conservation

### 4.2.1 Introduction

This case study concentrates on the inaugural years of the IPC from its establishment in 1976 until the year 1980. By this time it appeared to have a general credibility, with its initial, jointly organised conference with the Society of Archivists. This period was one of marked change in the approach to treating paper-based cultural material, such as watercolours, prints, drawings, ephemera and books, to name but a few – an approach that became accepted within the wider museum community.

The case study provides an insight into the attitudes of the paper conservators who formed the IPC, the choices made by the group, and the values that they felt were important. Decisions made at this time had an impact throughout the lifetime of the representative organisation. The case study also illustrates the vision that this group of paper

conservators had for the practice, while also providing an insight into how paper conservation changed over time.

An understanding of how and why the IPC developed is critical to understanding how it was organised and the structures it created. Understanding the paper conservators' motivations and beliefs also has a direct relevance to one of the key questions of this research, namely, the transcendent value of conservation. The newly formed representative body developed its own set of rules and guidelines, with which paper conservators complied. It set values, standards, processes and structures that remained well beyond the Institute's demise in 2005.

The case provides insights into the relationship between conservators' motivations and the organisational structures implemented. When it finally merge with five other bodies to form the Institute of Conservation (ICON), in 2005, it was fraught with much disagreement amongst its members. The roots of this division can be traced back to the approach of the founders of the organisation, how conservation was structured, and the work itself. By doing so, it also identifies the unique success factors that led to its establishment as the representative body for paper conservation within the United Kingdom.

A series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with three of the founding members of the Institute of Paper Conservation. In conjunction with these, peer-reviewed articles, as well as the original minutes of the institution itself were consulted. Finally, examples of the changing approach to the conservation of works of art on paper were sourced from publications dealing with conservation.



### **4.2.2 Background**

In the early 1970s, paper conservation emerged as a distinct occupation. The establishment of the degree course in archive-conservation in Camberwell College of Art, London, led to an increase in the numbers of academically qualified paper conservators working in the UK. Amongst these graduates was an understanding of the value that a collective/representative body would have for the development of paper conservation, so they set about organising one.

As previously outlined in Chapter One, Section 1.6 The History of Conservation, there was a heightened awareness, both nationally and internationally, of the need for and the value of conservation. Internationally, many groups were formed to represent and promote a new conservation approach. Chief amongst them was the International Institute for Conservation (IIC).

Inaugurated in London in 1950, the IIC organised a strategic review of its operations in 1958, leading to the establishment of regionally based representative organisations, or nationally based organisations affiliated to the core representative body, and the International Institute for Conservation – United Kingdom Group (IIC-UKG). The Institute of Paper Conservation began its existence as the Book and Paper Group, which was initially affiliated with an IIC regional group.

Within the practice of conservation in the United Kingdom, other disciplines had organised themselves into representative bodies and were offering training courses in conservation. The first training course was set up for archaeologists in 1954, when the Museums Association began to organise short courses on how to treat objects. The oil-painting restorers set up their own representative association in 1966.

As the IPC was formed, a traditional or trade approach was prevalent, and the new method of paper conservation was in its infancy. Both were vying for predominance and acceptance.

Increased emphasis on scientific research forced a re-evaluation of the prevailing methodology of the trade approach, which had emphasised returning objects to the appearance that they had when first created. This involved treating prints to eliminate all signs of ageing, which may have naturally built up, and removing any damage that may have been present, including discoloration. It generally involved the treatment of multiple objects at the same time, and it was considered by those proposing a conservation approach as being too invasive and too concerned with market demands, which required objects to be completely pristine and blemish-free.

For these reasons, there was a growing move away from an insular, closed approach to treating paper-based works of art and books, to a more open, verifiable approach, reliant on scientific analysis for greater verification of the processes employed. At the core of this new conservation approach were the values of reversibility and minimum intervention – values that the new institute promoted and with which its members readily identified. These values were the cornerstones of the profession, as well as the values or philosophy that drove the change.

There was a greater appreciation of the individual object and a move away from the treatment of numerous objects at the same time. Greater emphasis was placed on documentation and the need to leave behind, for the future, a record of the treatment that each object had received. In an attempt to promote a philosophy, paper conservators set about organising the IPC as a means by which they could advocate and advance its new approach. They did so because they had an appreciation of the materials, they understood the limitations of the old approach, and they passionately believed that a new way was needed in order to preserve this material.

### **4.2.3 Development**

In January 1976, a group of individuals met in a redundant church, St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe in London, with the intention of establishing a representative body for the practice of paper conservation. Three types of conservators were represented at this meeting: print and drawing restorers, bookbinders, and archive conservators. Many of them were newly qualified graduate conservators from the recently established archive-conservation course in the Camberwell College of Arts. Others were individuals who had worked as trade bookbinders or fine-art print restorers who were frustrated with the lack of change.

From this group, a number of individuals volunteered to establish a steering group. The first group dedicated to promoting paper conservation was subsequently formed. Initially, the group was accepted as a specialist representative group within the International Institute for Conservation – United Kingdom Group (IIC-UKG), and it was called the Paper Group (IPC, 2001). The Paper Group developed rapidly. The steering committee was comprised of Paul Collet (chairman), Vivien Southon, Judy Segal, Denis Blunn, Guy Petherbridge, Phillip Stevens, Stephen Hackney, Keith Holmes and James Brockman. Their first meeting took place on 18 May 1976, in the boardroom of the India Office (IPC, 1976). The committee remained in place until the first elections took place in 1978.

The minutes of the steering committee's third meeting, on 15 July 1976, note that the IIC-UKG had officially accepted the Paper Group as a subsection, and its official title was the International Institute for Conservation – United Kingdom Conservators' Paper Group. The IIC was a regional, geographically based organisation that had representative branches in different countries. By the end of 1976, the Book and Paper Group had begun to develop its own, separate identity. It called itself the Paper Group and had organised its own letterhead and a distinct logo. This placed it in direct conflict with the IIC-UKG's management.

Subsequently, the Paper Group's relationship with the IIC-UKG was to be short-lived for many reasons. According to some respondents, there were a few interpersonal difficulties between individuals on the Paper Group committee and those of the UK IIC. The UK IIC was a geographically based representative group that provided representation for all conservators, no matter their specialisation. On the other hand, the IPC was a specialist-based, practice-led representative group, which was at odds with the structures of the UK IIC. The difficulties seemed to have been not only interpersonal, but also organisational. Some of the respondents were disparaging about individuals on the UK IIC committee, saying that they were difficult to work with, while the UK IIC group, within its structures, found it difficult to accommodate a specialist group such as the Paper Group, particularly as it was so large.

Paper conservators had the confidence, even at this early stage of their development, to be self-sufficient. Indeed, they did not tolerate being subject to another group, and insisted on the right to determine their own direction. Paper conservators had been subject to this attitude for long enough in their dealings with curators and other professionals within the museum sector. As one respondent stated, 'Why should we go under an organisation [...] not as well organised, or have them dictate to us?'

There was a virtually seamless transition from the Paper Group to the Institute of Paper Conservation. The minutes of the first meeting of the new body note that because it was a new organisation, there were no previous minutes to acknowledge. Apart from this reference, there is nothing to distinguish this meeting from the last Paper Group meeting (IPC, 1978). The committee felt that it was 'entirely self-sufficient', with a membership of 390 individuals, and so it called an extraordinary meeting for 2 December 1977. Therein, the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC) was inaugurated, and its first committee meeting was held on 24 January 1978 (IPC, 1976; IPC, 1978).

When the group applied for charitable status, its members discovered that references to professionalism would have to be dropped from its description in order to comply therewith. This was something with which members clearly had an issue, as well as

difficulty implementing, both of which are reflected in the committee's minutes of the time. What was significant about this was that there was a strong resistance at committee level to any reversal of the emphasis on professionalism. The IPC achieved charitable status, so a compromise was reached. Its continued emphasis on being professional seems to have been further at odds with the fact that full professional status was not attained.

Once the Institute was established, it quickly set about developing the tools required to properly represent its members and paper conservation. It was a representative association in which the payment of a subscription conferred service. It wanted to be taken seriously by its peers as a discipline, and it saw a strong representative association as being one way through which it could achieve this status. Finally, there was a strong emphasis on quality within conservation, reflected in everything that the IPC did.

The Institute developed a structure quite rapidly, and it remained relatively intact for the organisation's lifetime. Two items were central to how it communicated with its membership and the wider museum community: the IPC newsletter and the IPC Journal. In 1976, The Paper Group set about publishing its first newsletter, the Paper Conservation News (PCN), and this was continued to be published by the IPC when it was inaugurated. It was the main means of communicating with its membership over the period of its existence. It was reviewed and redesigned on a number of occasions, remaining central to the communications strategy of the Institute.

Alongside the newsletter, the Institute organised its own peer-reviewed journal. Edited and designed by Guy Petherbridge and issued once a year, it contained long articles about conservation practice. Petherbridge had also designed *The Paper Conservator*, the journal published by the IPC, and there were plans to replicate this design and format across other conservation practices, such as oil-painting and stained-glass conservation, amongst others, although none of this came to fruition. The first IPC journal was published in December 1976, and it quickly became an accepted peer-reviewed publication, with examples of important articles on paper conservation.

The journal remains a reference point for paper conservators and the development of the practice. During a meeting on 15 July 1977, Petherbridge gave a summary of the current state of the publications. At this stage, the first newsletter was about to be mailed to members. Five hundred copies were printed, but it was envisaged that a normal run would be just 300. The first newsletter contained a list of the achievements of the group so far, its by-laws, an analysis of the IIC's decision to accept it as a member, the cost of publishing, and an appeal for articles and letters. It proposed to publish the newsletter three times a year, in March, June and September, with the intention of making it as up to date as possible. At its meeting on 29 January 1979, the committee decided to increase publication to four times a year due to the organisation's growing membership and an increased demand for information.

The possibility of organising a library was first mentioned in the Paper Group's minutes of 11 May 1977. Sources of information about the newly emerging discipline of paper conservation were very limited, and the committee was anxious to disseminate information about paper conservation to those who were interested. From December 1977 onwards, the Institute invested considerable time and resources into establishing a successful library. A special meeting, dedicated totally to discussions about the library was called for 28 March 1978. It shows the importance that the Institute attached to having a library, in that this was only the third full meeting of the newly formed Institute and it had dedicated agenda time to this resource. From then on, the library was a topic rarely off the agenda, and one that individual committee members addressed regularly.

The committee agreed to ask the Crafts Advisory Committee, the group with responsibility for supporting the development of craft at that time, for an initial payment of £1,500, for set-up costs, and an annual grant of £750 to purchase books. This represented a significant cost for a fledgling organisation at this time. At the committee meeting of 25 July 1977, it was reported that this application had been successful, and the CAC had granted the full amount requested. The library was named the Chantry Library, in recognition of the efforts of the second librarian, Judith Chantry (1943-1999).

One topic that exercised the IPC's executive committee was the quality of conservation training available to students wishing to study in this field. Its members believed that courses were being run by people who had little experience of conservation. They were critical of many training courses, claiming that they were old, trade-type training courses that simply had a name change, but little curricular transformation.

A number of course organisers approached the IPC to seek its approval. One course was with Colchester Institute, North Essex in 1979, one of three training courses for bookbinders set up during this time, the others being with Guildford College of Technology, Surrey, in 1978, and Brunel Technical College, Bristol, in 1981 (Winsor, 1998). At the committee meeting held on 18 January 1978, receipt of a letter from Colchester Institute was noted. This letter asked if the Institute would approve a two-year full-time course in book restoration. It also asked if the IPC could supply specialist 'external examiners'. Fred Marsh and Nicholas Pickwold were despatched to Colchester to assess the course.

A report on the visit was presented to the IPC committee on 11 September 1981. It was the opinion of the two assessors that there was not enough emphasis on paper conservation within the course curriculum, and it was decided that the assessors write to the organisers to explain their objections and the reasons why they could not approve the course. This incident shows how highly the committee's opinion was regarded and its approval sought.

Despite the growing importance of the Institute, there is very little evidence of any direct contact with the government throughout this period. Indirect support was provided by the government in so far as many of the committee members were employed by the state and given time to attend meetings, and many of the committee meetings took place in state organisations.

One respondent did recall that an opportunity became available to present the aims of the IPC to the then Minister for the Arts. An integral part of this presentation would have involved criticism of the practice in a number of state institutions. The proposed meeting was declined, as the individuals who were due to meet the Minister worked on a contract basis for the same institutions that they would have had to criticise, and they felt that to do so would impact negatively on their business.

The Crafts Council, a body directly funded by the government, did provide a significant degree of support to the IPC in its initial phase of development, enabling it to purchase books for the library. The government went on to have a far greater role in supporting conservation, but this was not mentioned by any of the interviewees. This support included the inauguration of the Conservation Register and commissioning the three books that comprised the *Science for Conservators* series.

The involvement of the Crafts Council was not recalled by interviewees, but it did have, as has been shown, an involvement in the emergence of the profession of paper conservation. It also championed conservation, as documented in two reports, *Conservation and Craft Skill* (Knott, 1976) and *The Needs of Conservation* (Brandes, 1984), outlined in the Conservation Unit case study. This suggests that the relationship between the Crafts Council and the IPC was probably quite a weak one, in that the former's role did not have a lasting impact on respondents.

Confidence was reinforced by the growth of the organisation. A membership list was compiled for the years 1977-1978, of approximately eight hundred members in total (26 July 1978). It rose to more than one thousand members by the end of 1980.

Later, there was a degree of conflict noted at some exploratory meetings held between members of the Society of Archivists and the IPC. A bad atmosphere at one of these meetings was attributed to the negative attitude of one person on the committee. 'Judith Segal wished to make it quite clear that only one member of the Society of Archivists'



technical committee had bad feelings towards us' (IPC, 1987). Both associations did go on to organise a joint conference, 'Cambridge 80', but there clearly was resistance to the Institute amongst some of the archivists.

One respondent gave an example of this relationship when he recounted his work on a series of seventeenth-century Armenian bindings in a library that had its own bindery. He was curious as to the instruction that the bookbinder had received from his curator, who had commissioned the work. He naturally felt that the original bindings should be retained as much as possible, as they were an integral part of the objects, which were very beautiful, valuable books. The binder showed the respondent the slip that accompanied the request to have the books treated, with the brief instruction to 'Repair.' This, he demonstrated, was a severe lack of input on the part of the curator, and a situation that, in his opinion, still remains in contemporary practice.

Not all curators were like this. Many who were interested in their collections welcomed conservators, as it was an opportunity to engage with other professionals and ask questions about the appropriate treatments for their works. Conflict also arose between the old trade practitioners and proponents of the new approach to conservation.

At a time when paper conservation, and conservation in general, was emerging as a specialised occupation, it is surprising to see the level of conflict that existed amongst the various representative groups. This was best reflected in the separation of the IPC from the IIC-UKG. All interviewees mentioned the interpersonal difficulties between the two groups at the time, which eventually led to the secession of the paper conservators. One respondent speculated on the potential position of conservation in the United Kingdom if there had been no split, but there was clearly a high degree of animosity amongst the various groups – a tension that remained until the accreditation process facilitated cooperation between them.

One of the most unusual sources of conflict came from within the ranks of paper conservators themselves. As explained earlier, at an early stage, paper conservators recognised the need to mediate at committee level because of the degree of friction between certain committee members. By choosing independent, non-conservator chairmen from the wider paper industry, they gained an advantage, but this barrier to a successful operation at committee level reflected a wider drawback amongst paper conservators in general. This friction was a source of conflict arising from a degree of aggression within the new organisation.

The 'Cambridge 80' conference took place in September 1980, and it was jointly organised by the Institute of Paper Conservation and the Society of Archivists, marking the end of the initial phase of the Institute's development and the investigation into its reason d'être. This conference was a great success, as evidenced by the interest of paper conservators from around the world (IPC, 1980). For some conservators, it had a significant impact on their professional practice. Over twenty-nine countries and the three main fields of archives, books, and works of art on paper were represented. Over four hundred delegates attended, and many others had to be turned away because of lack of space.

The Institute went on to have continued success representing its members, but 'Cambridge 80' provided reassurance to the IPC committee that its approach was correct. The conference confirmed that there was a high level of interest in paper conservation throughout the United Kingdom and the rest of the world, and it gave the IPC an impetus that sustained it through the next phase of its development. Reaction from national and international paper conservators, combined with the excessive demand for places at the conference, reinforced the IPC committee's belief that the direction it had been taking in developing the Institute was the correct one. Membership after the conference in 1980 was noted to be over 1,000 for the first time. As such, it also marked the end of the first developmental phase of the Institute (*Journal of the IPC*, Vol. 25, 2001). The IPC went on to organise further conferences, becoming the representative association for paper conservators in the United Kingdom and, arguably, the voice for paper conservation around the world.

#### **4.2.4 Analysis**

The interviews once conducted, were transcribed and coded. The codes were applied to the transcripts, and factors that promoted and inhibited the development of the IPC, as mentioned by the interviewees were identified. The benefits and drawbacks of the change were assessed and noted, while two further aspects of the data were analysed, namely critical comments made by each interviewee and the potential loss to conservation of the development. These factors can be readily identified from the texts, either as direct comments made by the interviewees or alternatively summarised from comments that they made.

Many of the factors considered to have had an impact on the development of the IPC were found to have an internal focus, that is, they involved events internal to paper conservation. The three factors externally focused were; events external to paper conservation, the momentum contributed by the establishment of the academic course in the Camberwell College of Arts, the floods in Florence (also considered to have had an impact on the pace of change within paper conservation), and the wider European movement having a similar impact on the momentum for change (mentioned by one interviewee).

The factors that potentially inhibited the development of the IPC were mentioned as being conflict with trade practitioners and curators. The development of an alternative/new way of conserving cultural paper-based material was a direct threat to both these groups, and they tried to inhibit its growth. Finally, conflict amongst paper conservators and their inability to agree at a committee level led to the establishment of the independent post of Chairperson.

The remaining factors had an internal focus. Two other factors that impeded the development of the IPC were mentioned, and these were: a degree of infighting between

paper conservators and ,a degree of fighting between paper conservators other practicing conservators. This relates to the internal debate conducted between paper conservators and members of the then IIC's UK branch, which provided the structure by which paper conservators could first form their representative body. Paper conservators wanted to secede from the IIC UK organisation, whereas members of this organisations controlling committee were reluctant to allow them to do so. A debate between both parties ensued, and the ultimate outcome of which was the IPC.

Other factors that impeded the development of the IPC were noted as being a resistance from traditional trade binders and restorers to the development of paper conservation, as well as the inertia of some curatorial staff within the museum sector.

From an organisational-change perspective, these factors can be classed as issues, images and identity. Three factors mentioned, however, have the potential to contribute to identity, and these are the belief in paper conservation as a process, the focus on quality, and, finally, paper conservators' need for perfection. Combined, all three factors are a powerful force, present throughout all five case studies.

Given that the IPC was a relatively new organisation, and that the factors have been regarded as primarily internally focused, there was little potential for them to be classed as image focused. As mentioned previously, image is the way that the members of an organisation believe that others see it. The only potential image issue relates to the notion that others were publishing articles about 'waterlogged wood', and paper conservation did not have a vehicle by which it could conduct its own research. One interviewee was aware that other conservators, such as archaeological conservators, were researching and publishing, while paper conservators had little chance to do so.

The remaining factors can all be classed as issues, that is, factors that can be described as events, developments and trends relating to the development of the IPC.

Four critical factors were noted throughout all the interviews relating to the establishment of the IPC. Firstly, there was recognition that the chairperson should not be a conservator because of the level of friction between members of the committee. An independent chairperson was considered desirable, as s/he could possibly diffuse many of the arguments and disputes arising between members of the committee. Secondly, one interviewee mentioned that s/he had had an opportunity to gain access to a Minister for the Arts, but s/he rejected the opportunity, arguing that if s/he gained access, s/he would have to criticise the British Library, and, given that s/he worked in a private capacity, such criticism would impact badly on his/her practice. Thirdly, another interviewee mentioned that the IPC considered setting itself up as a professional body, but it chose not to because it would be cost-prohibitive for its members. Finally, the Cambridge Conference in 1982, jointly organised with the Society of Archivists was mentioned as a key turning point in the fortunes of the IPC. It marked an awakening for the committee to the extent of interest in paper conservation, both within the UK and abroad.

When paper conservation emerged as a serious practice, its members were attempting to be the custodians of paper-based cultural material. The individuals involved with establishing the IPC believed in and promoted a new philosophy of intervention to preserve paper-based artworks, namely a conservation approach. They believed in it as a far superior approach to the method of intervention that had preceded it, and they set about promoting it.

There were other conservation-based representative organisations of which the founders were aware, namely architectural conservation, hence the awareness of articles about waterlogged wood. An alternative group, archaeological conservators, were undertaking research and printing their findings in their own journal as well as other journals. Paper conservators set about organising themselves to do the same. By the time that the IPC was formed, there were two separate representative bodies for painting conservators. Paper conservators looked to the activities of these bodies and aspired to organise themselves in a similar way.

To organise in the manner in which they did was a bold and very audacious aim, made by individuals who, at the time, had little standing, recognition or credibility. A profession's ideology can be, and often is, a belief fervently held by those who advance it. Paper conservators claimed that their method was the one true way of treating works of art on paper, to preserve them for the future, and they were evangelical about this. This attitude is clearly evident throughout the minutes of both the Paper Group and the Institute of Paper Conservation, and throughout the interviews conducted with those connected to the IPC's establishment. These paper conservators claimed that a conservation approach was the best and only legitimate route that could or should be taken to preserve paper-based works of art. This was reflected in how they operated as a group, putting them in direct conflict with the key players who had responsibility for these collections at the time, namely curators and a series of trade-based bookbinders and restorers.

As the group of individuals came together for the first time to form a representative body, they made choices that reflected their beliefs and values. An analysis of the case studies, the literature review and the archival material consulted highlights some of the key values espoused by paper conservation. As it emerged as a practice and organised itself into a representative body, its members had a number of structural options to consider.

One respondent mentioned, when interviewed, that the original committee gave consideration to the nature of the professional structures that it would adopt. The one key factor that prevented it from operating as a traditional, licensed profession was the prohibitive cost of operating such a system, which was beyond the financial resources of most of its members. This comment was important in that it shows the high level of consideration given, at this stage, to the nature of paper conservation's professional configuration. In addition it highlights an awareness of the wider options faced by the inaugural committee of the Institute of Paper Conservation as it started to organise itself. Furthermore, it shows the pragmatic approach that was adopted in response to the reality that the Institute faced as an organisation.

One respondent remembered the motivation of the original members, commenting, ‘Like a lot of professional groups that come together in a shared interest, it was carried on by the enthusiasm and sense of purpose that the people had because they all felt we were all trying to save something important, which was not being properly looked after’.

As it emerged, the Institute set the standards for paper conservation and how paper conservators related to others working within the museum sector. It espoused the two principles of conservation prevalent at the time within the wider conservation movement, namely minimum intervention and the notion of reversibility. These were the key values with which members were expected to identify. It advocated for the practice of paper conservation while simultaneously serving its members.

A respondent observed that when he addressed delays in getting the association’s journal compiled and printed, saying, ‘You have a very simple obligation to people who pay the fee to join the society, part of which was to get an annual journal ... and the other thing is, if you are trying to change the way people think, you need to have type on paper – at least in those days – because there was no other way of getting stuff out.’

As an organisation, the Institute had two roles: to promote the conservation message and look after the needs of its members, who had an expectation of service that comes with being a member of an association. These needs had to be met, otherwise the committee was failing its members. There was also an expectation from the members that the representative body would advocate for paper conservation on their behalf. Later in the interview, the respondent further qualified the ambition of the IPC by stating ‘It was a perfectly legitimate ambition to become sufficiently significant within the culture of a nation to have a voice,’ and ‘The Institute intended to be a moral force and not a legal one.’

One respondent stated that the establishment of the representative group was an attempt to get people together to share ideas, and its main aim was to publish. Archaeological

conservators had previously published and researched areas of interest for some time. The respondent's memory of the period was that there was an abundance of articles published about waterlogged wood, with no outlet for discussing paper-conservation issues. Paper conservators saw the need to organise as a group to spread the message of conservation and to undertake research. Another respondent reinforced the social element of the group by saying that her memory of the first meetings was that they were happy affairs and very sociable events.

Respondents mentioned that meetings were attended by those interested in paper conservation, to enable them to socialise, and this regular contact led to the topics of interest being identified, debated and resolved. At an extraordinary meeting held on 2 December 1977, there were calls from the membership in attendance for a conference on the chemistry of paper. Paper conservation is interdisciplinary in nature, and it borrows from aspects of other disciplines, such as science. This was the first of many conferences that the IPC organised, and post-prints were issued as a record of the event.

The Institute, however, was more than just a social grouping. There was a confidence and a high degree of self-belief within the new organisation, reflected in correspondence between the Institute and the Crafts Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG provided grant funding to crafts workers, and the Institute was anxious to have its members considered for such sources of funding. The latter subsequently wrote to the CAG stating, 'The leading practitioners of prints and drawings conservation, by virtue of their hypersensitivity to the inherent details and qualities required of them by scholars, curators and collectors, are considered amongst the foremost exponents of the craft of paper conservation and as such have a particular right to Government support'.

Paper conservators were eager to promote the conservation philosophy and keen for their approach to be accepted as relevant and applicable. They were eager that the logic of their approach be understood and appreciated. In a number of interviews, it was noted that the members of the Institute were eager for paper conservation to be 'taken seriously and [...] accepted as a viable discipline and practice'. This was commented on by another



respondent when he mentioned that he detected a slight inferior quality on the part of conservators when he first began to work with the group on accreditation. There was a clear perception amongst the conservators involved in the establishment of the IPC that, to be accepted by their peers, they needed to be credible, have credible structures, and act in a credible way. Hence, it was important for them to organise as best they could so that they could counter any of their critics, and to legitimise the IPC's approach.

Freidson (2001) questions the intent of a profession to develop its own knowledge base, regarding it as a key indicator of the nature of a profession. Two respondents recalled that what motivated the IPC's organisers was the need to do research, and for paper conservators to have contact with like-minded individuals.

From its inception, the IPC placed great emphasis on developing knowledge about practice. As it emerged, much of its emphasis was on getting the message of paper conservation out there, to people who were interested in learning more about it. There were discussions between committee members about the possibility of photocopying relevant articles in their possession and making them available to the interested parties. Very soon after its inauguration, the IPC produced its first newsletter, which became the key vehicle for disseminating information about paper conservation until the establishment of its website, in the late 1990s. Its first peer-reviewed journal, produced within the first year of the IPC's operation, featured articles of interest for paper conservators. The journals remain a valuable resource for paper conservators, reflecting the development of paper conservation over the organisation's lifetime.

The IPC dedicated a lot of time and resources to developing its own library as a means of spreading knowledge about conservation. There was a belief reflected in both the minutes of the IPC and in the case interviews that at the time, there was a lack of information or understanding about paper conservation. The Institute saw its role as filling that deficit. With support from the Crafts Council, it began to collect relevant publications and started its library.

The generation of research and knowledge did have an impact on practice. The findings show that within paper conservation, there is a constant questioning of the manner in, and the basis on, which interventions take place. Research into techniques, materials and processes has been undertaken by scientists and conservators alike for many decades, and these findings have an impact on practice. This research, as noted previously, feeds into changes and improvements in practice.

One such practice improvement occurred in the 1970s. Chloramine-T bleach was popular with paper conservators as a means of removing particular stains from paper. It was used quite widely because it had practically no side effects on the conservators, and it was good for removing stubborn stains from paper. However, when some conservators re-examined objects that they had treated, they found them to be suffering, and in poor condition with the passage of time. The paper was soft and delicate, and not as it should have been. The bleach was identified as the cause of the damage, and conservators stopped using it. Since then, further scientific research has identified a second process that the object must undergo in order to neutralise the bleach, thus eliminating the potential harmful effects that can occur.

Another dangerous practice was the use of thymol as a means of treating mould growth on organic materials. Some institutions set up fume chambers, into which they placed paper-based objects that had active mould on their surfaces. Thymol, in salt form, was placed in a dish over a light bulb, and the bulb was turned on for an hour a day. The heat from the bulb circulated the fumes throughout the chamber, and these, in turn – it was believed – would kill the mould. When thymol was found to have potentially harmful effects on practitioners the process was widely discontinued.

The constant questioning within conservation, something that is an integral part of its nature, reflects conservators' desire to do the best for the objects that they are charged with treating. In their past their motivation was to develop a greater understanding and knowledge of their chosen discipline.

The process of conservation demands a focus on quality. This was the centrally enduring, distinct characteristic of the IPC. Conservators pledge to do the best for the objects or collections in their care. The intervention that results has to be of a high standard. Quality of action is a central tenet of the conservation approach, and it is at the centre of all things undertaken by conservators. The emphasis on quality also influenced how conservators interacted with others within the wider museum community. There was a conscientious belief that the professional approach would provide conservation with a certain quality of engagement between its members, and between the group and other stakeholders within the museum sector.

One respondent pointed to a class element at play here, in that traditional bookbinding was classed as a ‘manual craft skill’, and so could be represented by a trade-based organisation. Because many members of the IPC were graduates of the archive-conservation course in Camberwell College, they were seen as being university educated, and so there developed a natural animosity between the two groups. This was evident when some of the committee members tried to talk to some of the heads of bookbinding training courses. The latter flatly refused to meet with the former, and there was hostility between them. One respondent noted that with the demise of the old trade approach, a great skill was lost. Many of the old bookbinders, the respondent claimed, were brilliant craftspeople with great manual skills. However, their demise was inevitable, given their overall approach to how they treated the material and their unwillingness to change.

A degree of resistance was apparent throughout the case study. When the Paper Group seceded from the IIC-UKG, there was disagreement with the main committee of the governing body. Its structures could not easily accommodate the Paper Group, and so the latter decided to set itself up as an independent organisation. There was clearly a degree of animosity between the paper conservators involved at the time and main committee members of the IIC-UKG, with one individual remembering it as being ‘very uncomfortable’ between the groups, and that paper conservators were ‘bloody bold and resolute’. The respondent agreed that this was part of the motivation for secession.

Another interviewee stated ‘We were a very well-organised professional group. Why should we stop and go under the auspices of someone that was younger, who was not as well organised as us?’ Another stated, ‘Or have them dictate? That’s a no-no. From the beginning, we were not just argumentative. We were lively and very intelligent [...] yes, single-minded – single-minded for conservation.’

These views, from two interviewees, highlight the strongly held and righteous belief that existed amongst the first movers in paper conservation. This became a value within conservation, and much of the conflict that followed stems from this. By far the most interesting comment from that sequence was that the organisers were not just single-minded, they were single-minded for conservation. Clearly, within this attitude, and at all times, the overriding concept was the promotion of conservation. The image that paper conservators were content to portray was that conservation was the right method to choose when treating works of art on paper and books, but the centrally enduring characteristic of the group – its identity – was its members’ deep-seated belief in the rightness of their approach.

Other conflict within the case study mainly resulted from two sources: firstly, disagreements between paper conservators themselves; and, secondly, disagreements with those with responsibility for collections, namely curators, bookbinders and trade restorers. By adopting the ideology that they did, paper conservators were placed in direct conflict with the established way of treating material. It was the responsibility of curators, in many cases, to decide on the management of collections, including their long-term preservation. Friction arose as many conservators were openly hostile to curators whom they saw as not caring properly for the collections in their charge.

Disagreements also occurred at a committee level, between individual members or factions, and between individual conservators. There was a passion for the cause of conservation amongst the members, and, on occasion, it spilled over into aggression. The IPC committee itself opted to secure a chairperson who had a knowledge of conservation, but who was from an outside, allied field, so that a degree of impartiality could be brought

to the decision-making process. The Institute of Paper Conservation used external individuals from the wider arts and paper-based sectors in the key role of chairman for the first few years of its operation.

A succession of Chairmen was recruited from the wider paper-based arts sector. This seems to have had two purposes: firstly, it provided the newly formed and developing organisation with access to resources and information that it did not possess; and, secondly, the independent chairman could be called upon to adjudicate on disagreements between committee members. One respondent recalled early conferences, during which, if you disagreed with the content of a paper just delivered, criticism could be extremely frank and emotive. This conflict almost certainly results from the passion held by the individuals involved in paper conservation, and it confirms the depth of the commitment that they had for the discipline.

The process that began with setting up the Paper Group, which eventually became the IPC, reached its maturity with the first conference that it organised, reflected in comments made by two interviewees directly involved with the event, about their experiences thereof. The interest from abroad, which they both remembered, was immense. They realised that there was a growing interest in good paper-conservation practice, and that the IPC had developed as a single conservation practice-based representative body. Many practitioners from abroad were anxious to join and become members. When the IPC did eventually succeed into ICON, in 2005, it is worth noting that over 50% of its membership was from outside the United Kingdom.

The setting-up of the IPC was a key time for the emergence of paper conservation as a serious, committed practice. An analysis of the key drivers and resistors identified from the in-depth case-study interviews shows a group of very committed individuals who had considerable belief in what they were doing, backed up by an emphasis on quality. The professional structures of the representative body reflected the realistic, practical ambition of its members. Its development led, in time, to the acceptance of paper conservation within the wider museum sector and with the general public alike. As a profession, it

espoused, as has been detailed herein, research and knowledge creation, and it used these to improve its overall practice. The ongoing friction between conservators and with trade practitioners led to a loss of skill and missed opportunity for the wider conservation movement. The emergence of the IPC marked the first step towards the professionalism of conservation. It led to the adoption of key values that became an integral part of conservation. This was the basis for subsequent change events.

#### **4.2.5 Conclusion**

The Institute and the individuals who founded and oversaw the IPC achieved two things: representing their members to the best of their ability, and ensuring that paper conservation became, in time, the accepted standard of intervention for the preservation of paper-based cultural material within the whole of the UK.

The Institute developed a focus that provided for the needs of its members while promoting paper conservation with a no-compromise approach. A key identity of the organisation was its single-mindedness and dedication to the practice, certainly in the early years of its operation. Its members had an almost evangelical belief in the rightness of this approach, and an ambition that matched this. They strove to promote and represent it to the best of their abilities, yet, they were very practical in their development. They realised that although attractive to set up as a profession in the traditional sense, this would have been cost prohibitive. This practicality is apparent throughout all the other case studies.

In the absence of an opportunity to set up as a profession, members strove to improve the professionalism of paper conservators and their representative body, the IPC. Central to the group's strategy was its dissemination of information through four sources: lectures, a journal, a newsletter, and a library.

Some of the key attributes of paper conservation had a significant impact on the success of its representative body. The conservation process puts a heavy emphasis on quality in the materials and processes that it employs, and this is reflected in the way that it structured its representative body. ‘Perfectionism’ was mentioned by one respondent as being a core principle of paper conservation at this time. There was a strong social element to the early association, with one respondent noting that this was one of the main reasons that the Institute was set up. The initial motivation was to get people together to share their ideas and experiences of paper conservation, and to promote it. One key aim was to publish articles on paper conservation, which reflects its ongoing emphasis on knowledge generation.

The motivation here, unlike that mentioned in much of the literature on professionalism, was not to exclude individuals from the profession, but to be as inclusive as possible, and better preserve/conservate paper-based cultural material. All that was required was conformity to the principles of paper conservation, as evidenced by two different approaches within the case study: the vetting of courses, to determine if they did conform to conservation principles; and, secondly, the development of the library, to promote the message of paper conservation. The adherence to principles can be seen in the assessment of the Colchester course. The criticisms thereof centred on the quality of content and training, and if this had matched the standards of the assessors, then the course would have been approved.

The success of the Institute of Paper Conservation was as a result, in no small part, of the dedication, vision and application of its original founders. Its newsletter, its journals, the establishment of the library, the vetting of courses, and, finally, its conferences all demonstrate the tenacity of these individuals. Their dedication and single-mindedness reflect their commitment to the conservation ideal.

The founders established the Institute in a manner that reflected the accepted professional standards of the day because that is what they felt would garner them recognition from their peers, and because they felt that it was beneficial to their members. They believed

that the conservation approach was the only way forward for the preservation of paper-based cultural material. They had little time for those who did not share this ideal and, on occasions, put themselves in direct conflict with individuals for what they considered to be the good of the material. However, this belief, its standards, and overall culture were all contributing factors when it came to debating the convergence process some 25 years later. After the 'Cambridge 80' conference, paper conservators realised that this was a global belief. By this time The Institute was recognised as the main group dedicated to the promotion of paper conservation.



## 4.3 The Conservation Unit

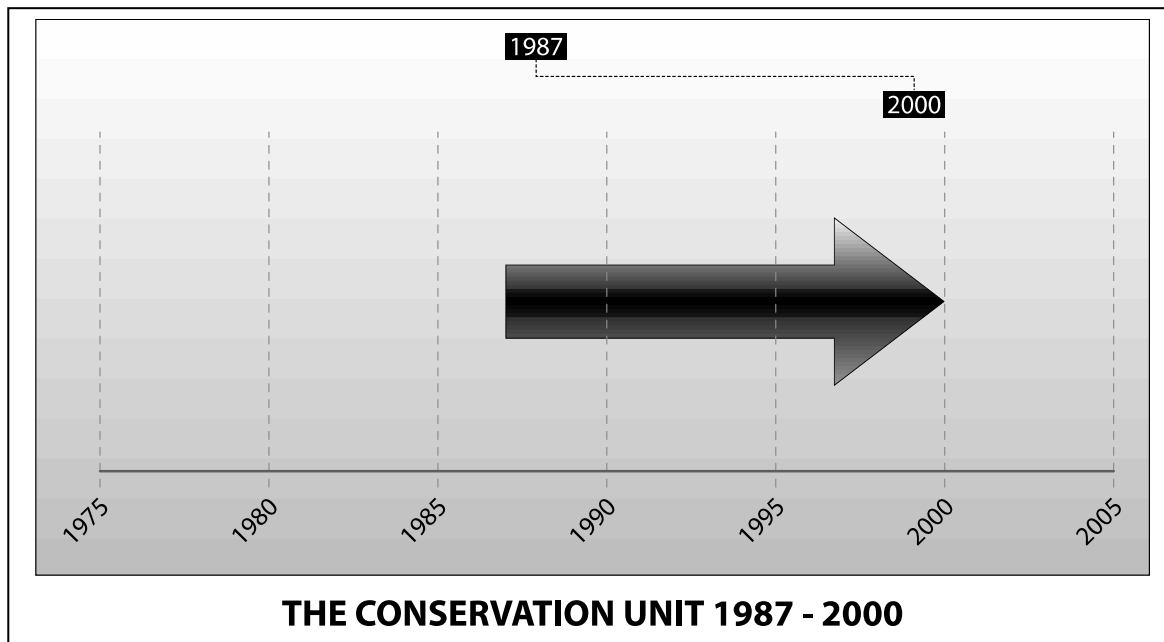


Figure 4.3: Timeline for the Conservation Unit

### 4.3.1 Introduction

The Conservation Unit was a state-sponsored intervention, the purpose of which was to support the development of conservation within the United Kingdom. It was established in 1987, as part of the newly formed Museums and Galleries Commission. By the time it was established, the IPC had been in operation for almost ten years. The Unit, throughout its lifespan, had an immense impact on the structures of conservation in general, and on paper conservation in particular.

A number of reports had been produced for the government by various bodies, including the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Crafts Council which emphasised the deficit within the general organisational structures of conservation (Knott, 1976; Brandes,

1984). The state was the custodian of large collections of cultural material, responsibility for which it had divested to the various national cultural bodies. Alongside the need for a specialist unit was a growing acceptance of the rightness of a conservation approach to treating cultural works on paper.

The reports advocated a conservation approach to preserving cultural objects, and the logic of this was becoming more accepted by the government. These reports culminated in the Brandes report (1984), which was commissioned by the Crafts Council, the body with responsibility for conservation at the time. One of its main recommendations was that a group be set up to promote and support conservation. These findings were accepted by the then Minister for the Arts, Lord Gowrie, who approved the establishment of the Conservation Unit, and it began operations on 1 April 1987. The Unit eventually became a subsection of the Museums and Galleries Commission, whose remit was to promote the development of the museum and gallery sector.

Established to address a clear and substantial need within the museum sector, the development of the Unit at this time represents a changing dynamic within conservation and how the state intervened to support the museum sector. It was a major intervention by the government to directly support the museum sector, and, in particular, conservation. A review of the Unit's operation provides an insight into the state of conservation over time, how it changed, and, finally, the threats that it faced. In assessing the threats, the Unit, towards the end of its existence, provided a blueprint for the future development of conservation within the United Kingdom. It intervened to directly support conservators, whether they were working within institutions or in the private sector. As such, the Unit had a very direct impact on the development of conservation, and it provided a significant boost to the fledgling, emerging practice thereof.

This case study examines the factors that led to the Unit being established and its impact on conservation over time. It analyses the Unit's development to gain further insights into the changes that were occurring in conservation, and, finally, it assesses the legacy of the Unit and the impact that it had on conservation during its operation and beyond.

In-depth interviews took place with the three purposively sampled respondents, who had direct experience of the management of the Conservation Unit over the lifespan of the organisation. Printed minutes from both the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Conservation Advisory Panel, a subcommittee of the Commission that advised it on conservation matters, and the Unit's publications were consulted.

#### **4.3.2 Background**

As aforementioned, the Conservation Unit was established by the Museums and Galleries Commission on 1 April 1987, set up with the approval of the then Minister for the Arts, Lord Gowrie. It was to operate for over thirteen years, until the Commission was replaced by the Museums, Library and Archives Group, a body set up in the year 2000 to represent the sector.

The impetus for the establishment of the Unit came from the report *The Needs of Conservation*, commissioned by the Crafts Council and written by Brandes in 1984. At this time, the Crafts Council was the statutory body with the remit to maintain craft skills, including conservation. Established in 1971 as the Crafts Advisory Committee, its remit was to advise the government on the needs of artist craftsmen. By April 1989, it was granted a royal charter, and the objective of the new organisation was to 'encourage creation and conservation of works of fine craftsmanship and the accessibility of these works to the public' (Crafts Council, 2015).

The Brandes report (1984) was a strategic review of conservation that contained recommendations on how it should be developed, supported and promoted. Brandes had been head of the Office of Arts and Libraries and had a familiarity with the arts and conservation sectors. The aims of the report were: first, to identify the principal areas of need for conservation and to assess, broadly, how they were being met or otherwise; and, secondly, to recommend priorities and appropriate organisations to carry responsibility for

conservation, including the necessary links between the public and private sectors. One of the report's key recommendations was the establishment of a specialist body to promote conservation, out of which the Conservation Unit was established.

There had been a growing awareness of the need to support conservation, highlighted by successive reports, which Winsor (2001) attributes to the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries report commissioned in 1963.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation funded an investigation into what it described as the provision of service 'that had far lagged behind the general recognition of [its] importance, and that is now quite inadequate, both to the need and the demand' (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1972). Its findings recommended greater promotion of conservation at a government level. In 1974, the UK IIC produced a report entitled *Conservation in Museums and Galleries*, which it updated in 1989. This report highlighted the association's concerns for the condition of collections within the United Kingdom. In 1975, Knott of the Crafts Council produced a report investigating conservation practice, highlighting the limited training opportunities available to prospective conservation students within the different areas of specialisation.

The conservation-representative bodies had been in operation for some time. The first representative body, the Association of British Picture Restorers, was founded in 1943, and it had been actively promoting awareness and a need for conservation. The Institute of Paper Conservation had been successful in securing financial support and recognition from the Crafts Council. Its lobbying successfully changed the policy so that conservators could access financial support from the Council on an individual basis.

There was interest, too, in conservation from other organisations within the museum sector. The Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries, the forerunner to the Museums and Galleries Commission, had a working party to consider the problems relating to conservation in museums (MGC, 1980). The Museums Association had

produced a number of conservation supplements with its journal and had been involved in organising training courses in conservation (Winsor, 1999).

Some governmental departments, such as the India Office, the Public Records Office and several departments of museums, were involved in organising workshops and disseminating information. Paper conservators who worked in these various public bodies could use the resources of each for the benefit of their representative associations, and although this was somewhat limited, it did amount to a significant secondary support over time.

When the Museums and Galleries Commission was established, on a statutory footing, it became the natural home for conservation, and the Crafts Council shed its responsibility thereof. Taken in their entirety, these instances highlight the growing importance of conservation within the museum and gallery sector at this time, while also recognising a deficit in how conservation should be represented and developed.

#### **4.3.3 Development**

The Conservation Unit had two very distinct phases of operation, marked by the tenure of its two managers, Leigh and Milner. The way in which the Unit fulfilled its brief under each manager was very different.

When first established, the Conservation Unit had a staff complement of three. David Leigh was appointed as the first head of the Unit by the Museums and Galleries Commission. Leigh had lectured on conservation at University College Cardiff and had been a member of the executive committee of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation on a number of occasions. He reported directly to the secretary of the Museums and Galleries Commission, Peter Longman.

Peter Winsor was the Unit's information officer. He was a metals conservator who worked in the Department of Conservation in the British Museum. Winsor had acted as that department's information officer and was acting editor, at the time, for *Conservation News*, the UKIC's publication. He worked within the Unit until its closure, in the year 2000.

Morag Acheson provided administrative assistance. Soon after its establishment, Mary Giles was contracted to advise the Unit on conservation training issues and attended on a part-time basis. She had also assisted Brandes with compiling the *Needs of Conservation* report. Both Leigh and Winsor had administrative experience from their previous positions, and both had trained and practised as conservators.

The Museums and Galleries Commission set up the Conservation Committee, the role of which was to advise the Conservation Unit and the Commission itself on conservation matters. Its first meeting took place on 20 May 1987. The chairman of the Conservation Committee was an officer of the Museums and Galleries Commission – Brandes, from its establishment in 1987 until October 1993 – and its activities were reported and approved by the Commission on a regular basis. The remainder of the Conservation Committee was made up of individuals working in conservation.

The first committee was comprised of Andrew Naylor, from Naylor Conservation, Janet Notman, from the Burrell Collection, Anna Plowden, from Plowden & Smith, Peter Sarginson, from West Dean College, and, finally, Andrew Oddy, head of conservation at the British Museum. Its membership was balanced between those conservators working in public museums and those in private practice. It provided them with direct access to the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Conservation Unit, and, as such, gave them valuable access to the key development group for museums within the country. The secretary of the Museums and Galleries Commission, Longman, also attended Conservation Committee meetings.

The broad aims of the Unit were to raise standards in the quality of care available to the nation's material cultural heritage. The specific tasks set for the Unit by the Brandes report included the dissemination of information about conservation and conservators and liaising with the general public and media. It had responsibility for completing and operating a central register of conservators – something that had been started by the Crafts Council. It was charged with commissioning and publishing technical information about materials relating to conservation.

The Unit was also responsible for collecting and publishing information on education and training in conservation, assessing the future needs of conservation and liaising with training agencies. It also had responsibility for administering grants to conservation initiatives, and it was meant to raise these funds from industry and grant-giving bodies with an interest in conservation (Smith et al., 1992). They were ambitious targets for such a small organisation. Significantly, there was no mission statement for the Unit, just a series of tasks and objectives for it to achieve. This was something that was addressed at a later stage.

Initially, the remit of the Conservation Unit was to support conservators working within public institutions and those in private practice alike. It was unusual to have a state body providing support for conservators working in private practice, but Brandes had rightly identified the unusual nature of conservation, wherein conservators moved from public to private practice, and there was a growing trend for museums and galleries to contract out their conservation work. The Unit's remit extended beyond that of the Museums and Galleries Commission, in that it was charged with providing a greater level of direct service to museums, the general public, and other users of conservation services. Although the Unit was a division of the Commission, it had a very strong identity of its own from the outset. It had its own letterhead, identity and contact numbers, and although it was clearly part of the Commission, it operated in an independent way.

In an article written in the UKIC's *Conservation News*, announcing the establishment of the new organisation, it was noted that it was established in response to a perceived need

within the museum and conservation community. The Unit saw its role as providing a central support service and being complementary to, but not succeeding, the representative associations. The latter were viewed as key allies in achieving the Unit's aims, and they were the first organisations that it canvassed. Within a number of months, the chairman of the UKIC was invited to attend the Conservation Committee's meetings as an observer, and Leigh was invited to attend the UKIC's meetings on a similar basis.

The initial operation of the Conservation Unit revolved around two distinct areas: the establishment of the Conservation Register, and the promotion of training. The Crafts Council had tried to establish a register of conservators, with limited success. When the Register passed from the Crafts Council to the Conservation Unit, it was comprised of a collection of index cards with the contact details of a number of conservators and described as 'five years out of date' (MGC, 1987). The Register was developed into a database, initially maintained on a stand-alone computer, and its continued development was reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Criteria by which conservators should be assessed were developed, and this created a template by which conservators could be added. This approach had a dual purpose: firstly, to provide the user of a service with enough information about the conservator so that the user could make an informed decision; and, secondly, to impose restrictions on entry to the Register, in an effort to set and maintain standards. Enquiries could be made of the Register by the clients of conservators, either by post or by telephone. A selection of relevant conservators was suggested whenever a member of the public inquired about a particular discipline.

The other area of initial activity within the Unit was the assessment of conservation training in the United Kingdom. It attempted to evaluate the training provided with the need for conservation expertise, and the gaps between what was needed and what was available. It contracted Mary Gilis OBE to review and address the training needs of the sector. Gilis had been head of the private office of successive Ministers for the Arts, and she was a trustee of the Victoria and Albert Museum. She had compiled the training



chapter in the *Needs of Conservation* report, so she was familiar with the area. As Leigh put it, ‘There is a bewildering variety of types of qualification (BTEC, diplomas, degrees, Museums Association certificates, etc.), and it would be helpful for students and employers if the situation could at least be clarified, if not streamlined’ (Brandes, 1984).

The Unit was also aware that a conservation course could be set up by anyone, taught by anyone, and it may or may not have relevance to the needs of conservation. It proceeded to compile a leaflet to highlight the courses available, eventually publishing it in conjunction with the UKIC. Contact was made with Mr Duval, who was involved with the Business and Technology Education Council to highlight conservation’s training needs. Finally, a full review of the courses available and the needs of conservation were undertaken.

By the second meeting of the Conservation Committee, five courses, all looking for moral and financial support, were proposed for consideration. A questionnaire was sent to the twenty-three full-time course directors to secure a greater understanding of the situation relating to conservation training. The information from this survey was compiled by Gilis, who published her findings in 1989, in *Conservation Training: An Initial Survey of Full-Time Courses in the United Kingdom*. This publication detailed, for the first time, all available courses to those who wanted to develop a career in the sector.

As a result of the report, a joint training committee, combining the Conservation Unit and the Museum Training Institute (MTI), was formed within the Unit. The first meeting of this new committee took place on 16 May 1990. The Museum Training Institute was established after the report *Museum Professional Training and Career Structure* was published by the Museums and Galleries Commission and its findings accepted by the Minister for the Arts. It was an independent body, responsible for overseeing the development of careers in the museum sector.

Both examples highlight how the Conservation Unit acted confidently, particularly in its initial phase of operation. From the evidence, it appears to have adopted a regular policy

of identifying a problem or opportunity within conservation, undertaking the necessary research, and providing a solution that was credible and durable. This was a template that it adopted for dealing with issues within conservation. From this, it would propose a solution to address the issue and then oversee this solution on an ongoing basis.

When the Unit was formed, there was an ongoing debate within conservation about the need to accredit conservators, and a number of the professional bodies were in the process of developing programmes to realise this. Initially, the Conservation Unit did not see the Conservation Register as being part of an accreditation process. It was happy to let the professional bodies achieve this, but the Unit's members did admit that, in time, they would use the accreditation process for admission to the Register. The Unit hosted a symposium on accreditation on 3 November 1987, which was the first time that the various representative bodies had the opportunity to discuss this contentious issue of accreditation. The meeting was one of the first to take place between the newly constituted United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, formerly the UKIIC. Relations between the two groups, the IPC and the UKIIC had been strained since the Paper Group seceded to become the Institute of Paper Conservation. The meeting was deemed a success and the Conservation Unit continued to facilitate and support the accreditation process until it was fully achieved.

From its inception, the role of the Unit quickly developed to encompass other areas of responsibility. It became responsible for distributing the Museums and Galleries Commission's conservation grants and any sponsorship that it managed to raise separately from interested parties. In its initial year of operation, it had £65,000 to administer over and above the Museums and Galleries Commission's Conservation Grant Scheme. This was allocated in three ways, with £57,000 being given to pilot projects, £2,000 given to conservators to enable them to attend conferences, and £6,000 reserved to cover some of the Unit's set-up costs. By 1992, the annual grant allocation had risen to £95,000. It was allocated to help conservators maintain their skills, to assist interns in finding placements after they had graduated from academic training courses, and, finally, to assist with the purchase of equipment.

Within its first year, the Conservation Unit had established a library of materials that could be consulted by conservators and museum professionals. In 1988, the Unit became one of three international centres linked to the Getty Information Network, a database of abstracts of conservation publications, which, at that time, was an impressive new development within conservation research. Access to this was through electronic mail and charged at an hourly rate of \$40, but subsidised access for students was proposed.

In the pre-Internet era, printed informational booklets were a very effective way of communicating the Unit's message to its constituents. A series of leaflets was produced to highlight its services, ranging from a general description of the Unit to leaflets on conservation education, career development, the Conservation Register, and on the difference between conservation and restoration. The latter arose because of some confusion about both terms when applications were being made to the Register, and the Conservation Committee decided to produce a leaflet to clarify its definitions of both (MGC, 1990).

The practice of producing explanatory leaflets continued for the Unit's lifetime. For example, in 1993, it issued several publications, including an eight-page booklet, *Managing your Museum Environment*, a directory, *Training in Conservation*, and a companion publication called *Working in Conservation*, which was published in conjunction with the Scottish Conservation Bureau. A directory of conservation research was also published, and, finally, it produced two editions of *Conservation Updates*, its regular newsletter. The Unit's publications were a significant means of communication between it and those interested in conservation. The nature and quantity of the pamphlets issued by the Unit reflected its priorities at that time.

There were three books produced by the Crafts Council entitled *Science for Conservators*, which were out of print when the Unit was established. The latter bought the rights to the books from the Crafts Council and republished the initial three volumes, with plans to

complete the remaining three volumes and complete the set of six volumes in the series. The initial reprinting sold out within two years, and the publication of the series was then undertaken by Butterworths. Another significant volume originally printed by the Crafts Council was *The Conservation Sourcebook*. It provided a list of all conservation suppliers and practitioners, as well as agencies involved in the area, and it was very popular when produced by the Crafts Council. A decision was taken by the Conservation Unit to update it and republish it, which it did in 1990.

The development of the Unit can be traced through the establishment of the various committees by the Conservation Committee, and the various part-time contractors that it employed. For example, the Unit established a joint training committee with the Museum Training Institute. A working committee was set up to explore the possibility of establishing a centre for conservation excellence, in accordance with the recommendations in *The Needs of Conservation*. There had been an attempt to establish such a centre at the Department of Archaeology in the University of London, but this failed. A committee was set up to highlight the research into conservation that was taking place within the United Kingdom and publicise it within the sector. This resulted in a publication, *A Directory of Conservation Research*, which provided a comprehensive overview of the quality and variety of conservation research being undertaken at that time, in 1991.

The European Commission's developments within conservation were viewed by the Conservation Unit as having the potential to generate income. The European Union had begun to organise representative bodies from the different member countries. Leigh saw potential for the Conservation Unit in advising on its development. Similarly, greater contact between the Unit and the European Union was seen by Leigh as having potential benefits for private conservators to secure commissions. A discussion paper was prepared in 1988, on how to 'stimulate the conservation industry on an international scale, with particular reference to the opening-up of the European Market in 1992'.

The Unit commissioned a business advisor to explore the interest that might exist amongst private conservators in availing of opportunities in Europe. It also took part in a number of

European exhibitions, at which it received considerable attention for its activities and, in particular, the Register. Significant interest had been shown by both Denmark and France, as they tried to establish a similar operation in their own countries. Buoyed by this interest, the Unit recognised the potential in developing a greater presence in Europe, and, in 1990, it employed two part-time contractors to represent it at a European level.

The Museums and Galleries Commission was subject to regular, obligatory government inspection. Richard Wilding undertook its *Quinquennial Review* in 1991, and he recommended that the activities of the Conservation Unit be separately reviewed. In February 1992, a review of the Unit's activities took place. Robert Smith, with the assistance of Brandes and Hall, was asked to undertake this and make suggestions on how to better integrate the Unit within the operations of the Commission. The review heralded a change in the relationship between the Unit and the Commission, and it provided a new direction for the former.

According to the opinions canvassed as part of the review undertaken by Smith et al. in 1992, the Unit had not only carried out its remit to the letter, but it had exceeded it. There was widespread praise for its achievement, from conservators working in both the public and private sectors, museums, and the Area Museum Councils. Smith et al. (1992) asserted that Wilding seemed to have misinformed himself as to the origins of the Unit, misunderstood the nature of the conservation profession, and placed undue emphasis on the opinions of the Area Museum Councils. Criticism aside, Smith et al. (1992) used the opportunity to review and refocus the Unit's activities. They recommended that it should develop activities to provide more strategic help and guidance to the Area Museum Councils and work more closely with the Commission on aspects of its policy.

In 1993, Leigh left his post as head of the Unit to take up the position of chief executive at the Museum Training Institute. The post of head of the Conservation Unit was reviewed and became Head of Conservation and Collections Care, to more accurately reflect its role within the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Unit's broadening sphere of activities. Milner succeeded Leigh, and she was employed on a five-year contract. Prior to

this, Milner had been contracted by the Unit to be its European officer, to promote United Kingdom conservation within Europe. She had considerable experience in European conservation, having worked in both Italy and France. She had trained as an oil-painting conservator in Italy, had taught conservation in Belgium, and worked in France as an oil-painting conservator. This experience secured her the part-time position.

Milner, in her first six months of operation, undertook an extensive series of meetings within the museum and conservation community to assess its needs and views of the constituency of the Museums and Galleries Commission. The Commission was attempting to intervene more strategically to promote conservation. It had reviewed its activities in conservation and collections care, as well as its relationship with other organisations involved in cultural heritage, and defined the principles that should govern work in the field. This had been the recommendation of the review by Smith et al. (1992) and it had been accepted as policy, but there seemed to be objections from conservators working in private practice, who felt that they would lose out under the new arrangement. The Commission disagreed, confirmed its current direction, and invited conservators working within private practice to contribute to the newly developing policy (Museums and Galleries Commission, 1993-94). Much of this approach to the development in conservation was overly bureaucratic in nature, marked by successive meetings and reviews.

This shift in operation reflects a change in emphasis within conservation practice in museums – a change of which the Unit was perhaps not conscious. Museums had moved away from the direct-intervention model to a greater emphasis on overall collections care. The Museums and Galleries Commission had become more involved in promoting preventative conservation within the museum sector than had it previously been. To assist with this, it employed an environmental officer on a part-time basis. The Commission had produced a series of best-practice documents as part of its standards-setting programme, and this included a care-of-collections factsheet, produced in response to a growing demand within the sector. It also had a wider role, advising the government and museums, and Smith et al. (1992) noted that the Unit should be contributing more of its expertise to this aspect of the Commission's work. Consequently, the post of environmental officer

was confirmed on a full-time basis and transferred to the Conservation Unit. Clearly, the role of the Unit was changing in response to changes within the sector itself.

During his tenure, Leigh had inaugurated a series of conservation awards ceremonies, the first of which was held in 1993. The aim was to promote good conservation by rewarding those who practised it, and the awards were designed to be motivational. An award was added for achievement in communicating conservation in 1995, clearly reflecting the perceived need for greater advocacy for conservation as a whole. This theme would continue to occur over the following ten years. New categories of grant support were introduced, with grants being given for advocacy and the promotion of conservation, reflecting the growing awareness thereof.

After undertaking her survey, Milner highlighted two areas that needed action and concerned the Unit in the final years of its operation. The first of these was the number and nature of the representative bodies concerned with conservation. Practically all of these were run on a voluntary basis. They were small, and this made communicating with them very difficult. It forced the Unit to operate in a 'trade organisation' role, and this, Milner argued, was not in conservation's or the Commission's long-term interest. Her belief was that the representative associations should take greater responsibility for the development of the sector, which needed to operate more efficiently. She proposed promoting this by supporting an amalgamation of the bodies, something that would eventually come to pass some ten years later, with the convergence process and the establishment of the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

The second area needing action related to a statistic within the strategic review, which highlighted a group of disenfranchised museums. At that time, only about 200 of the 2,000 museums in the United Kingdom had access to conservators, either on staff or on a contract basis, with a large proportion of the 1,800 museums being maintained by volunteers. It became a priority for the Unit to engage with these individuals and empower them to look after their collections as best they could. An instruction manual called *Ours for Keeps? A Resource Pack for Raising Awareness of Conservation and Collection Care*,

designed to address the needs of this volunteer group, was written, designed, published and circulated to all the relevant museums. It was the major achievement in the second phase of the Unit's activities.

Smith et al. (1992) noted in their review of activities that the Conservation Unit's operation could be divided into two distinct phases: that which had taken place up until the review, and that which would take place thereafter. The reviewers rightly identified that, for the first five or so years of its existence, the Unit had concentrated on what it called 'the supply side' of conservation. The reviewers recognised that it had strived to improve the professional nature of conservation practice, rationalising training and improving studio equipment. In the early days of its operation, grants were given to conservators to purchase studio equipment, regardless of whether they worked in the public or private sector. The report, however, recommended a shift to the demand side of conservation, namely to quantify the need for conservation within museums and galleries. This could be achieved by highlighting the extent to which collections were being maintained, the need for national strategies, and the promotion of overall collections surveys. This dual approach sums up the strategic direction of the Unit over the thirteen years of its existence.

In its first few years of operation, the Conservation Unit could be judged to have intervened to support the overall direction of the representative associations. It introduced measures that were supportive and mirrored the overall direction of the representative bodies, but it was very careful not to influence or dictate how they should develop. With the second phase of intervention, there were two key factors that impacted its activities: the first was greater integration with other areas of the Commission's activities; and the second was the number of museums that had no contact with conservators, defined as a result of research undertaken by the Unit. The point at which Milner took over after Leigh's departure appears to be a critical one because it marks a noticeable shift in policy, from supporting conservators to supporting museums in conservation issues. It also illustrates a shift in the nature of the profession, from one that needed external support to one that was maturing.



#### **4.3.4 Analysis**

Only four reasons were noted for the development of the Conservation Unit, and most of these were focused on wider external issues, rather than internal ones. The Unit's establishment was credited to the activities of the Crafts Council and the Brandes report, but credit was also given to the dedication of individuals. Significantly, momentum was mentioned as another factor central to the establishment of the Unit. The five-year strategy produced by the Conservation Unit was an internally focused factor, but one that was central to its development. It provided a blueprint for the development of conservation as it emerged and began to be accepted, and, as such, it was a very important intervention.

There were a similar number of factors inhibiting the Unit's development, with three factors mentioned as being central to its eventual failure: inertia, a lack of confidence, and the experience of conservators. These were all personal factors relating to the failings of conservators, whereas other factors mentioned a greater interest taken by the then government in conservation, which was externally focused on wider issues relating to conservation.

The critical factors analysed from the interview data relates to the notion that the Conservation Unit was a quango, and that it was regarded as something of an anomaly, while operating within a very loose structure. Recognition was given to the fact that the Unit was doing much of the work that should have been done by the representative organisations themselves, but the latter were clearly not in a position to do so at that time.

The Conservation Unit was set up in reaction to a clear concern that conservation needed to be directly supported, and a mandate was established to do just that. The Unit was charged with supporting the development of conservation in the face of a clear image deficit that the representative bodies were unable to satisfy. An analysis of how it intervened illustrates that it followed a broad pattern of interventions, similar to those

undertaken by the Institute of Paper Conservation as it emerged, and both organisations shared similar values, beliefs and aims.

The Unit was an endorsement of the conservation approach at the highest level within government. This government recognition gave conservation the credibility it needed as it continued to emerge. At the time, the government had a keen interest in the museum sector, reflected in the establishment of the Museums and Galleries Commission, and the establishment of the Unit took place in this context.

Both Leigh and Milner had a similar aim for the Unit: to promote conservation with both the general public and the government. Its interventions followed the values and beliefs that had been identified with the emergence of paper conservation as a discipline. The Unit set out to be the focus of conservation within the UK. Its independence, a key value of conservators, was apparent in the manner in which the Unit initially structured itself – something that was referred to in the IPC case study.

The Conservation Unit was established under the auspices of the Museums and Galleries Commission, but it adopted its own name and developed its own identity. As one respondent stated, ‘We were based in a commission with a royal warrant, and we had our own distinct identity. We were the Conservation Unit. Our acronym was TCU. We had our own headed notepaper and a very clear independence. We were on the top floor of a building at 7 St James’s Square. We only had a corner of the top floor, which was empty for quite a long time. We were firmly a part of the Museums and Galleries Commission’.

The Conservation Unit was asserting its independence from the main organisation, the Museums and Galleries Commission – something that it did without consideration. It had its own board of advisors, whose purpose was to advise on its operation, and the secretary of the Museums and Galleries Commission was the chairman of this board. The board itself was made up of key individuals within the conservation sector, and its role was to

advise the Unit. This furthered the enhancement of its independent status within the sector.

There was no precedent for the Unit, and no other organisation to which it could compare itself. It had to determine for itself the best ways to intervene to promote conservation in general. It took its role very seriously, and there was clearly great commitment from the staff towards its responsibility. Staff members were guided in their objectives by the Brandes report, which provided the template for intervention, at least in the early stages. However, one respondent made the point that the Unit was essentially undertaking work that should have been undertaken by the different representative bodies. At the time when the Unit was formed, the representative groups were poorly organised, fractured and isolated. There had been very little cooperation between them, and, indeed, a degree of antagonism existed between the IPC and the UKIC, two of the largest, most committed representative bodies. When the Unit ceased to operate, the respondent maintained that little had changed, and s/he remained critical of the level of responsibility undertaken by the various conservation-representative bodies for conservation's development.

Throughout its existence, the Unit had two differing strategies of intervention: the first, concentrating on assisting conservators working in the public and private sectors; and the second, concentrated on measures to promote conservation throughout the wider museum sector. Its initial focus was unusual, in that it recognised that many conservators working privately were responsible for public collections. These were conservators who, although self-employed, were contracted to conserve public collections and it made sense to support them. Initially, the Unit offered direct support to conservators through the provision of funding, to purchase key pieces of equipment, to help conservators attend conferences, and to provide bursaries to facilitate training. It developed an internship system, whereby conservators could gain valuable work experience once they had graduated.

The change in strategic emphasis took place after five years of the Unit's operation, coinciding with two separate events. When Leigh, the original director of the Unit, resigned his post and was replaced by Milner. This brought about a natural refocusing of

its activities, reflecting the level of change that had taken place since the inauguration of the Unit. No longer was it reasonable to focus on the supply side of conservation, whereas it had been necessary when the Unit was established. There had been a move towards preventative measures and overall collections management.

A review of the Conservation Unit, which followed a non-departmental government review by the Cabinet Office in 1990 into the activities of the Museums and Galleries Commission, was very complimentary of its activities up until that date, but its independence seemed problematic. The Unit had a slightly anomalous position within the overall structure of the Commission. Its separate identity, phone numbers, budget and finances all caused concern. The review into the Unit's activities, although very positive about its achievements up until that date, ultimately led to it being further integrated into the activities of the Commission. The promotion of good collections management became a central policy of the Museums and Galleries Commission, and the activities of the Conservation Unit were redirected to support this.

The research also identified a large group of museums and galleries that had no trained conservators on staff, as well as those institutions that engaged conservators on a contract basis. Significantly, Milner tried to address the conservation needs of this disenfranchised sector, mainly small museums and galleries that were run by volunteers and had limited budgets. Many of these institutions could not have availed of the services of a conservator, but the message of conservation was still very relevant to them. Milner addressed their concerns with the Unit's publication of *The Big Red Book*, which was aimed at imparting information to those charged with caring for these collections.

The Unit could see the value in accreditation for conservation, and it facilitated this process. The first meeting of the various representative groups was organised by the Unit. The Conservation Unit was anxious to ensure that these groups took responsibility for accreditation. The Unit saw the Conservation Register as being a complementary, parallel development that could benefit from advances in accreditation from the wider

conservation community. It was happy to give support, but it insisted that this initiative had to come from the members of the various conservation bodies themselves.

The knowledge base of conservation was greatly enhanced by the Conservation Unit, in a variety of different ways. It undertook research into the structures of conservation, namely training, the development of standards, and the levels of research undertaken. It provided financial support to conservators to enable them to attend conferences abroad, which helped them to develop professional contacts. It was present at trade fairs associated with the Arts and promoted its activities at various conferences, both at home and abroad. The Unit had a clear strategy of developing widespread understanding and knowledge about conservation.

This case study is unique, in that it was difficult to identify any conflict herein. One respondent noted that he had to deal with a degree of apathy with conservators because, in his opinion, they ‘just didn’t get it’. There was a degree of apathy associated with the Conservation Unit, and this acted as a barrier to its progress. The respondent also recognised that those managing the Unit had little experience of running such an organisation prior to taking up their posts, and that, with hindsight, they could have done things differently and achieved different results.

It is arguable that the individual representative bodies should have been providing much of the intervention undertaken by the Conservation Unit. However, many of these bodies were not in a position to do so, for a variety of reasons. The legacy of the Unit was that it provided vital assistance to the sector, facilitating its maturity. It intervened to support the developing professionalism by supporting the ideology that was apparent as paper conservation formed as a distinct discipline. It reinforced the focus that the sector had on improving the quality of conservation training, further developed the knowledge and understanding of conservation, and, finally, facilitated better structures throughout the sector. It would have been very difficult to perceive the accreditation process, the establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation, and convergence happening within the time frame that they did, had it not been for the efforts of the Conservation Unit.

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion**

The impact of the Conservation Unit on the structures of conservation was immense. According to Smith et al. (1992), it had brought considerable cohesiveness to the conservation sector in its first few years of operation. The Unit set standards for the profession and improved the standing of conservators, both within museums and private practice.

The ability of the Unit to widen and change its focus from the supply side to the demand side reflects its overall understanding of the demands of conservation at a particular time, and a dedication to doing what is best for conservation as a whole. This almost singularly was as a result of the single-minded commitment and dedication of the individuals involved with the Unit over the thirteen years of its existence. These individuals had to contend with a wider practice that was, at least, resistant to change, and, at worst, apathetic. There was also an admission that there was a lack of management experience on the part of some of the individuals, which may have hampered some of the Unit's operations. It may be argued that this was countered by enthusiasm and dedication.

Initiatives undertaken in the second half of the Unit's existence had a major impact on conservation practice in the future. In the seventh *Conservation Updates*, published in 1995, Milner gave a summary of her research into the state of conservation within the UK, in which she wrote, 'Accreditation through the professional bodies will bring in the higher-quality content that the register cannot provide. There is a need for more high-level training in preventative conservation for established professionals. When conservation is under pressure, conservation in one form or other is often the first victim. We all need to become better advocates for conservation and collection care'.

This statement highlights the main areas of conservation development that arose in the ten years after its publication. The establishment of a viable accreditation process, greater

specialist training, and advocacy for conservation were all themes that impacted upon conservation's development. Significantly, in this article, Milner asks the noteworthy question, 'What does the community of conservationists need at the most at this time?' The answer, she maintained, was, 'From our vantage point, it seems, critically, it needs a united voice and, above all, a united vision' (*Conservation Updates*, 1995).

Milner went on to play a significant part in realising this when she promoted and presided over the convergence process, a topic that consumed conservation in general, and paper conservation, specifically, over the next few years. The idea that there should be one voice for conservation was not something new. In fact, it had been suggested in the reviews of conservation that took place as far back as the 1970s. However, Milner argued that its needs had become more critical and that its time had come.

The Conservation Unit was central to the development of conservation over the thirteen years of its existence. Not only did the Unit support conservation initiatives over the time frame of its existence, but many of the projects that it supported had an impact well after it ceased to operate.

The individuals involved in the Unit were dedicated, enterprising individuals who had one central aim: the promotion of best practice within conservation as a whole. They were advocates for this within the wider museum environment, and they were instrumental in promoting it throughout the sector.

## 4.4 Accreditation

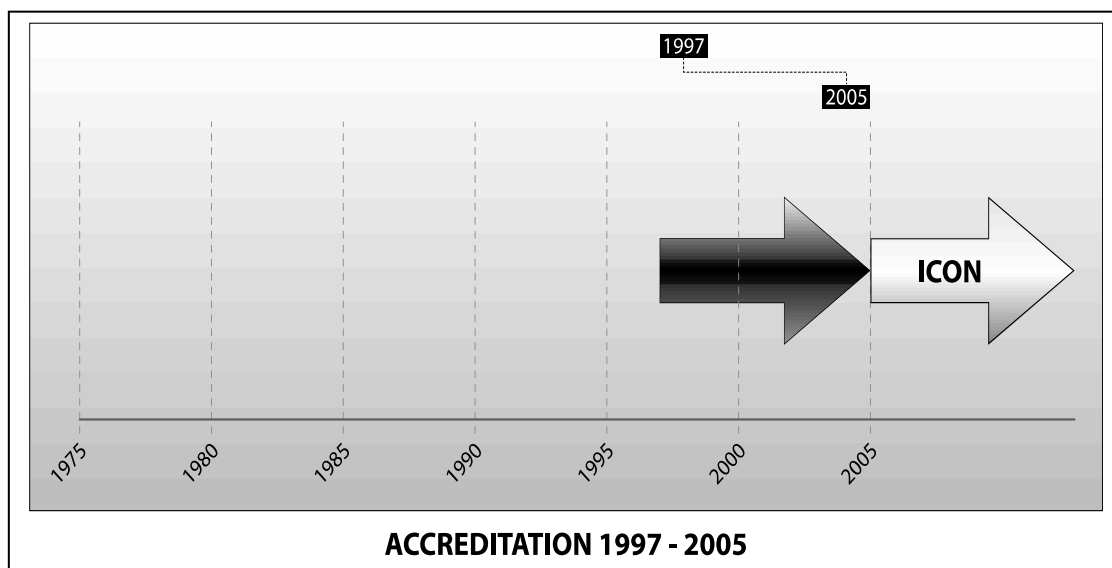


Figure 4.4: Timeline for Accreditation

### 4.4.1 Introduction

The accreditation process was a key change within the structure of paper conservation as it matured as a discipline. It was an attempt to recognise best practice within conservation and provide assurance to members of the public and institutions interested in using the services of conservators. Building on the achievements of the past, it was central to the development that came after it, convergence.

Accreditation was effectively the first project on which the various conservation-representative bodies collaborated. This cooperation was facilitated, in part, by the Conservation Unit. It also furthered the professional structure of paper conservation. Accreditation was the next logical step in a process that had begun with the establishment of the Institute of Paper Conservation, the development of the occupation, and the overall



thrust to professionalise. Its evolution illustrates the level of commitment, personal sacrifice and time given by most of the participants involved in the process.

#### **4.4.2 Background**

The Conservation Unit case study demonstrated that there had been a marked shift in emphasis, from treating individual damaged works to a collections-management focus, but further changes had taken place within the working structures of paper conservation.

Where, at one time, most conservators were employed directly by institutions, many were now self-employed and working on a commission basis for cultural institutions, as well as the general public. Winsor's survey of conservation, undertaken in 1999, estimated that there were approximately 1,600 conservators working on a contract basis, with a similar amount being employed in museums and galleries. There was a belief amongst some of the conservation-representative groups, particularly the UKIC and the Society of Archivists, that both these sectors needed reassurance about the conservators whom they were using, and so the accreditation process began.

When Buchanan became chairman of the IPC, in April 1997, he decided that the establishment of an accreditation process would be the main objective of his tenure, and he set about realising it. Buchanan had been an accredited engineer for some twenty-five years, prior to retraining as a paper conservator, and he brought that experience to the process. As such, he reflects the tradition within paper conservation of engaging people from outside the sector because of their specialist skills.

The IPC was not the only group trying to achieve accreditation. At this time, the UKIC and the Society of Archivists were both in the process of developing their own accreditation processes. Initially, there was little cooperation between the three bodies. In fact, none of them knew how the others were progressing in developing their accreditation processes. This is somewhat surprising, given that, in less than five years from the start of

this process, the proposal to merge conservation bodies would first be made, and that, within seven years, both the UKIC and IPC would no longer exist, with the two having been merged into the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

#### **4.4.3 Development**

The initial investigation into accreditation was undertaken by a subcommittee of the main IPC committee, which comprised three members: Frances Hinchcliffe, Ann Speadbury and Jonathan Rhys-Lewis. They were tasked with consulting members and making recommendations to the main committee as to the best way to proceed with the accreditation. From their research, a consultative document was compiled, entitled *Accreditation Report*, and recommended to the membership for approval at an AGM held on 26 March 1998.

There was a high degree of dissent at this meeting, which one respondent put down to a lack of understanding of the intent of the committee, rather than disillusionment with the process of accreditation. Certainly, there was a perceived threat to some paper conservators by the process or the change, and they were vocal and somewhat organised in their opposition. It was agreed that a plan to install and manage an accreditation programme would be put forth for consideration at the next AGM.

Initially, the IPC had intended to develop this plan in conjunction with the other two bodies. However, the UKIC felt that it was too far ahead of others for them to catch up, and it wanted to continue its own fast-track method. The IPC believed that there was merit in the three bodies merging. In the end, the compromise was that all three would introduce their own programmes while a collective group was established to explore the possibility of a joint approach.

The Joint Accreditation Group (JAG), mandated to devise and agree a framework by which all conservators could be accredited, met for approximately a year. It consisted of

representatives from the three groups and an external consultant, Stan Lester. It realised initially that the group members did not have the time, expertise or experience to devise the standards for accreditation, and so it canvassed for assistance. Lester had experience of training and accreditation, the skills that the group was missing.

Buchanan credits the success of the standard route to accreditation to two things: Lester's 'soft-spoken but firm logic and order to our travails', and Horie's 'unflagging effort and enthusiasm, [which] brought to fruition the standard route'. Lester went on to secure a PhD as a result of his involvement in the process, entitled *The Development of the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers: A Form of Professional Systems Architecture* (2002).

This group would later develop the standard route to accreditation, known as the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR), a set of common standards by which all three groups could be assessed for accreditation. Effectively, the JAG decided on the best measure of good practice, deeming judgement to be the key attribute that needed be assessed. In 1999, responsibility for its operation passed to the National Council for Conservation-Restoration (NCCR), and it was administered by the Professional Standards Board, which was set up to oversee the implementation and development of the system.

Throughout 1989, while these standards were being decided, all three organisations progressed their own fast-track systems. The IPC wanted to organise a coordinated approach to fast-tracking, but agreement could not be reached between the three parties. The UKIC and the Society of Archivists both organised their own, separate fast-track processes. A number of options were considered by the IPC, but it eventually opted for strict eligibility criteria, as it was felt that this would be the fairest, simplest and most impartial option. An applicant had to have at least ten years' experience as a conservator and be proposed by two sponsors who had at least fifteen years' experience.

Another committee was formed from within the main IPC committee, and it had responsibility for a variety of tasks associated with the fast-track process, namely developing the application form, researching codes of ethics and continuing professional development, devising the terms of reference for the assessment committee, and selling the whole concept, particularly to the department heads of the major museums and galleries. Individual members were assigned each of these tasks, and clearly, for a voluntary committee, this was a major undertaking.

The code of ethics that the committee decided to adopt was that of the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (ECCO), as it was not markedly different from that researched by Charlotte Lewis for the IPC. Conservators interested in applying for accreditation had to complete the fast-track form. Their responses were then evaluated by a separate committee, set up to evaluate these applications. This part of the process was anonymous, with a code being given to each application.

Dr Sheila Steiger was appointed director of the fast-track process and tasked with devising a fair system of accreditation. She recruited eight board members to oversee and conduct the assessments. Some reserve members were recruited, so the final total was twelve. Steiger was appointed because she was a well-respected paper conservator and she had conservation experience in areas other than paper conservation, as well as previous experience in assessing conservator-restorers. She also lived outside of the United Kingdom, so she was somewhat separate from the resident conservation community. All twelve assessors remained anonymous.

Buchanan (2001) calculates that two hundred members of the IPC were accredited as part of the fast-track system, and he maintained that the support that the process received was a measure of its success. Furthermore, he notes that a meeting held on 17 June 1999, called the Next Steps Conference, at which the views of the volunteers and the JAG were shared, was a watershed, in that the universal mood was positive and all contributions were focused on making the accreditation process better. There was simply no dissent against accreditation. The meeting was in marked contrast to that of March 1997, which

introduced the *Accreditation Report* to members. The JAG had finished its work and developed into a new body, the Professional Standards Board, which was owned by the National Council for Conservation-Restoration (NCCR) and required to oversee the implementation of the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR).

One of the key reasons why accreditation occurred when it did was as a result of the motivation of the individuals involved in the process and their overall belief in it being the next logical step for the development of conservation as a profession. Their dedication and commitment to realising this outcome was the most significant reason why accreditation was realised. Alongside this dedication, they brought a range of skills to realise their goal. Buchanan's experience as an engineer equipped him to understand the accreditation process in a way that, perhaps, most conservators at the time did not.

One of the interviewees was a founding member of the Paper Group and had an intimate knowledge of conservation in the United Kingdom. At the time of interview, s/he was resident in the United States, where s/he had been involved in other accreditation processes. S/he had excellent project-management skills, which s/he had demonstrated on some extraordinary conservation projects. Critically, s/he was also a trained paper conservator, so s/he had an intimate knowledge of the practice. These varied skills and the breadth of experience aptly qualified to organise the committee charged with vetting applications as part of the fast-track process.

There were two failed attempts at establishing an accreditation process before the third, successful attempt. Buchanan believed that there was a lack of understanding of the process by those previously charged with establishing it. One respondent maintained that conservation had not sufficiently matured as a practice in the previous two attempts to be able to maintain or establish an accreditation process. Another maintained that conservation was not sufficiently mature when accreditation did eventually take place. In 1987, the Conservation Unit held a meeting to facilitate greater cooperation between the various sectors of conservation that were exploring accreditation. It took two failed attempts and the passage of ten years before this aspiration was eventually realised.

Lester, although contracted as an external consultant to the project, was very committed to its success. He provided an independent voice and opinion, and technical knowledge of the process to which those involved listened and acted upon. Buchanan, Steiger and Lester were just three of a large contingent of dedicated conservators who applied themselves to realising accreditation. The time commitment that many made to the project was far in excess of anything considered reasonably acceptable. It is also very apparent that the interdisciplinary nature of the development contributed to its success.

Paper conservators were very conscious of the fact that the barriers to entry in the sector were quite low. They believed that anyone could set himself up in business as a paper conservator, with limited training. Those who did secure academic training, naturally, objected to unqualified individuals setting up and operating like this. Their objection was made in terms of the potential damage that an untrained person could do to individual works on paper or, indeed, whole collections, as opposed to the business threat posed by these people. Lester felt that conservators saw themselves as being slightly inferior to other professions with which they came into contact. He suggested that the accreditation process was a way by which they could address this problem.

The development of conservation within the private sector led to a demand from both conservators and users of that service for a system that could confirm quality, a system on which users could rely as recognition of high standards. As mentioned in the previous case study, the Conservation Unit had operated the Conservation Register after inheriting it from the Crafts Council. This was a register of recommended conservators, those who had been assessed as having good practice as it was understood at the time. The register could be consulted by the general public, and there had been a growing interest in it from the general public and those involved in the museum sector. The development of accreditation by the conservation profession is something that certainly complemented the Conservation Register, and which would perhaps replace it in time. The Unit was instrumental in fostering, in both direct and indirect ways, greater cooperation between the various conservation-representative bodies.

The momentum for change needed to be kept high for the duration of the process. If insufficient momentum existed, paper conservators would become apathetic towards the change. One interviewee mentioned that the accreditation proposal had momentum, and it was realised in an acceptable time frame. Inherent in this is the suggestion that if the pace of change were slower, then the accreditation process ran the risk of failing because of inertia.

One of the biggest impediments to the change, at least in its initial phase, came from conservators themselves. Buchanan who chaired the annual general meeting of 26 March 1998 faced considerable criticism from the membership of the IPC towards the proposed change. When questioned about it ten years after the event he claimed that he could still not understand the reasons for the animosity. He felt confident that the idea of accreditation and its implications had been clearly communicated to the membership. However, he did concede that there may have been a lack of understanding amongst the members as to the proposed change.

There were a number of issues that contributed to a resistance from conservators. These issues had their origins in the latent issues around the previous failed attempts, which seem to have revolved around trying to assess how a conservator could approach and treat objects to be conserved. It was clearly not reasonable to base an accreditation system on this premise, but it was accepted as a criterion by some members. It was something that Buchanan had to address as part of the process. Some ten years after the process had been successfully operated, some of the conservators interviewed continued to question the lack of emphasis on the object in the accreditation process. Buchanan emphasised that it was a process about a conservator's judgement, and not about the object, but there remained the contention rather that the process should have as its focus the object being conserved.

The accreditation process in the UK had no parallel elsewhere throughout Europe. As referred to earlier, the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations

(ECCO) had developed criteria for training new conservators. It prescribed an educational requirement of degree and master's qualification, followed by a period of work experience. There was no requirement for ongoing, continuous training at the time. One criticism levelled at it by conservators who had followed the prescribed route into the profession was its relevance. They argued that they had their academic qualifications, and accreditation was not part of their criteria. It was another layer of administration, so why did they have to subject themselves to it within the United Kingdom? As one respondent stated quite bluntly, 'I have a master's, so why do I need another qualification?'

Another pertinent issue related to how conservators were trained. A large percentage had become conservators through the traditional master-pupil apprenticeship system. These conservators believed that accreditation was not applicable to them, and that they would not be eligible for accreditation. This however, was not the reality, but clearly the misapprehension remained and it was the source of resistance to the accreditation process.

Some respondents criticised the accreditation process on the basis that best practice was an organic – hard to define or measure, and constantly developing. Once it was defined and clarified then it was automatically out of date because the process had further evolved. Measuring best practice was also seen as being very difficult to achieve.

The accreditation process was designed to reassure the general public and other users of the conservation service of the good standing of a conservator. The critics of the process argued that the general public was unaware of it as a quality-assurance process within conservation. The general public was one of the key stakeholders in the process, and if it were not aware of its benefits, then the process would end up being simply a backslapping exercise for conservators. This criticism aside, it was clearly an important, necessary development, undertaken by three separate representative organisations in response to a clearly defined need. Testament to this is that over ten years after its inauguration, it has continued to develop and improve. The process has received favourable comments from other, associated disciplines and has been adopted as a model of best practice by conservation bodies in other jurisdictions.



#### **4.4.4 Analysis**

The analysis of the eleven factors that led to the acceptance of the accreditation process highlights that all had an internal focus, except for two factors: growing pressure from the private sector for a more effective service, and a greater emphasis on quality by the mid-nineties, when accreditation was first suggested. Two themes are apparent within the remaining factors: an emphasis on quality, and a degree of professional insecurity.

All the factors that impeded the development of the change were internally focused, except for one: the fact that the general public was unaware of accreditation. The remaining factors related primarily to structural issues within the administration of paper conservation.

Five of the eleven factors relating to the promotion of the change were personally focused and encompassed paper conservators' individual concerns. Of the factors that impeded the establishment of the accreditation process, four were personally focused, five were structural, and the final one was focused on issues outside of paper conservation.

One of the key identities in the factors favouring accreditation relates, as it did in other case studies, to the individual efforts of key influencers, who proposed the change. This was further supported by recognition of the efforts made by some of the individuals charged with implementing the accreditation process. In this case-study group, motivation was mentioned as being critical to the acceptance of the change, and, in this instance, group motivation should be considered as an identity. It was also one of the first times that professionalisation was mentioned as a factor. The professional agenda and what it means to be a conservator were mentioned by one interviewee as being of importance.

How others viewed paper conservation can be detected in two factors in support of the change. These were: that paper conservators were more responsible for heritage because of their training, and a need to put conservators on a par with archivists and curators. There clearly remained a perceived gap between paper conservators and curators, but it seems to have diminished since it was mentioned in previous cases.

One interviewee, who was accredited, said that he still used unaccredited conservators, and he made the decision to use a conservator based on his/her ability and skill, and not if s/he was accredited. This comment emphasises that although accreditation was a process supported by conservators, this support was qualified by an objective assessment of the right conservator for the job.

One of the criticisms faced by those who championed accreditation was a constant questioning about the role of the object in the process. This was a criticism that was addressed by explaining that at its core, accreditation was recognition from one's peers that one was a good conservator. It did not and could not assess how one treated objects. Even though this aspect was addressed at the time, a senior paper conservator still highlighted the lack of the object's role, and its conservation, in the accreditation process. A further criticism was raised by another interviewee, when s/he said that the process was only as good as the recognition people gave it, and that ten years on from its establishment, many within the museum sector were still unaware of the existence of the accreditation process.

Accreditation was an important issue for conservators. Concomitantly three sections of the profession developed their own separate approaches to achieving this. Accreditation was clearly seen as something that the profession of conservation needed, and its proponents were prepared to commit significant resources to achieving it. There had been little direct contact between the three groups prior to accreditation. There certainly seems to have been a degree of competition between them, at least in the early stages of the process, but accreditation's importance to all three was reflected in the eventual joint approach and its ultimate realisation as a conservation standard accepted by all.

The accreditation case study shows the desire within conservation to improve its structures and its commitment to the professional process. There had been significant growth in the numbers of conservators working on a self-employed basis, for the general public and institutions alike. By 1999, Winsor's research had identified 1,600 individuals working in such a manner within conservation, with a similar number working for public institutions.

According to Buchanan (2001), there was a growing need to provide a degree of quality assurance to the users of conservation services, and so the accreditation process was established. Conservators were also attempting to improve the nature of their engagement with customers, reflecting conservation's continued emphasis on quality.

An earlier argument that it was the cost of providing a licensing system that dissuaded the original members of the IPC from adopting it, is worth revisiting. Retrospectively one can observe conservation as a more developed profession. The accreditation process was the way in which conservation attempted to provide this assurance for the users of its service.

There were two direct outcomes as a result of the accreditation process within conservation: to improve the quality of engagement between conservators and customers, and to improve conservation's professional operation. Accreditation provided the clients of conservators with an assurance that the accredited conservator, in the opinion of his/her peers, was competent, and that the accredited conservator, when assessed across a set of agreed criteria, was found to be compliant with these standards.

Accreditation went further than this. It introduced continued professional development to conservation in a systematic way. If one had been accredited, one would be expected to maintain one's level of expertise by undergoing training on a regular basis, with a minimum level agreed to ensure the renewal of accreditation. This made accredited members responsible for ongoing training – a set of minimum standards for continuous

improvement. Again, this demonstrates conservation's emphasis on quality and improvement.

The literature review introduced professional ideology as the collective beliefs of like-minded individuals who have a common goal. By introducing the accreditation process, conservators were attempting to create a credential that would be recognised as a measure of good conservation practice. It provided a further degree of closure within the profession and a means by which conservation gained further control over credentials associated with 'higher learning'. Accreditation also attempted to introduce a level of quality control between conservator and customer. Conservation was anxious to improve its service, making it more difficult to imitate.

The accreditation process also reflected a change in how paper conservators engaged with an object. It gave recognition to a shift in emphasis within conservation, from a focus on the object, or an objective approach, to a greater consideration of the users of conservation services, or a subjective approach. Arguably, this was a process taking place within conservation, and the accreditation process simply reflected this. Buchanan as Chairman of the IPC faced many questions about the role of the object in the accreditation process. He found himself having to explain, on many occasions, that it involved an assessment of the judgement of a conservator by his/her peers for the benefit of service users. How an object was treated did not form a direct part of that process. Accreditation's purpose was to provide assurance to the users of the conservation service, and in that, it was subjective in its approach.

This shift in conservation's objectivity has resonance in the question constantly faced by Buchanan: how does accreditation assess how an individual conservator treats an object? His response was that, as an assessment process, it has nothing to do with it. Buchanan emphasised to conservators over and over again that the accreditation process simply assessed the attitudes of conservators by conservation, and it did not evaluate how they treated objects. He believed that it would be near impossible to establish a system that could evaluate how an object would be treated. This constant questioning reflects the lack

of a role played by the object in the process. What accreditation did was take consideration for the customer's needs marking a seminal shift in emphasis from the needs of an object to that of a conservator treating that object.

The accreditation process was not without conflict. The case-study interviews and archival sources highlight two main areas for conflict: firstly, resistance to the overall concept from within the general membership itself; and, secondly, from disgruntled members who had failed the initial accreditation process.

At a general meeting to held explain the process, there was a significant degree of resistance to the whole concept from the membership itself. When questioned about this, Buchanan had difficulty explaining why it had happened. He maintained that he had been very upfront in explaining the process, providing the membership with extensive explanations as to the benefits accruing to conservation, and of the process itself. Clearly, the process was perceived as a threat to the members of the IPC at that meeting, and they were quite vocal in their resistance. Ironically, there was unanimous agreement about accreditation at a later meeting.

Some of those involved in the fast-track assessment process faced considerable aggression from fellow members. This aggression emanated from individuals who were disgruntled, having failed the initial fast-track assessment process. Respondents admitted to having lost friends as a result of their role in the process, on top of a considerable commitment in time on their behalf and on the behalf of the individuals pressurised into undertaking this process.

Considerable resources were committed on a voluntary basis to ensure the success of the accreditation process, and certain conservators directly involved with it paid a high personal price because of their efforts. It is quite apparent that there was no individual gain accruing to anyone involved in the process. The only apparent motivation was the

perceived improvement of conservation and, in particular, the more professional conservation of cultural material.

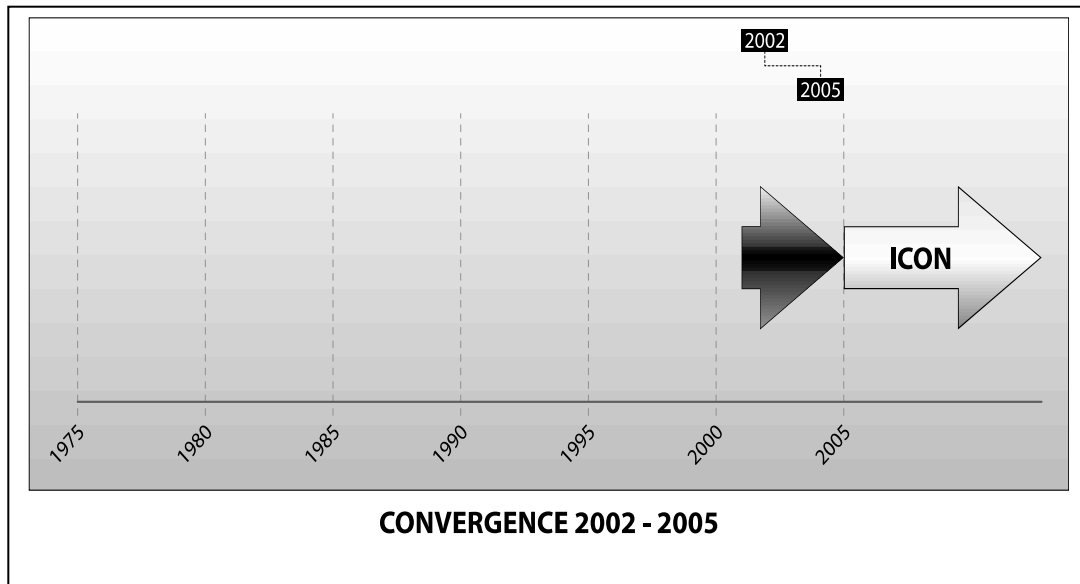
#### **4.4.5 Conclusion**

By 2005, the end of the time frame covered by this research, there were 647 accredited conservators, and the process's remit had been widened to include the growing discipline of preventative conservation. There were plans to develop it further, to include an art technician's grade. These were measures of the success of the approach and the process. Praise for the system has also come from fellow professionals, such as archivists, while the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR) system was adopted by conservators in Israel. The ownership of the process transferred from the National Council for Conservation-Restoration (NCCR) to the Institute of Conservation (ICON) as part of the convergence process.

The accreditation process was a milestone in the development of the three representative associations involved, and its impact had far-reaching consequences. All three associations successfully cooperated to ensure accreditation's success, and this in itself was a major achievement. According to Lester, the PACR process had a strategic value for all three associations, in that it improved the standards of conservation while introducing a new system with regular ongoing reviews, by which further change could be introduced.

Accreditation strengthened the role of the NCCR while it had responsibility for the PACR system. This enhanced role was critical to the realisation of convergence, the next significant change event to happen within paper conservation. Finally, the accreditation process realised the professional aspiration of the first IPC committee, namely licensing its members. It brought the prospect of full professionalisation for paper conservation closer than it had been.

## 4.5 Convergence



**Figure 4.5: Timeline for Convergence**

### **4.5.1 Introduction**

The convergence process was a term devised to illustrate the process in which a group of conservation-representative bodies merged in 2005 to form one overall representative structure, known as the Institute of Conservation (ICON). It was an ambitious project, the realisation of a recommendation made by successive reports since the 1970s, all of which highlighted the benefits and value accruing to conservation as a result of having one professional representative body. The establishment of ICON brought to an end the IPC, an organisation that had its start thirty years before. Two case studies – the establishment of the IPC, and this case, Convergence – bookend the time frame of this study and reflect periods of major change within conservation.

Convergence was not an easy process for paper conservators. There were diametrically opposed opinions about the merits and benefits of this process, particularly amongst the

members of the IPC. One group of paper conservators wanted to continue with the practice-based representative body, while another group was in favour of the change. The debate around convergence was very emotional and divisive at times, as evidenced in the letters sent to the IPC committee during the convergence process. Some conservators who could not accept the change opted not to join the new representative body.

Merit abounded in the different sides of the debate reflecting opposing beliefs as to how paper conservation should be represented and developed. What prevailed was an overriding logic, that paper conservation's best interests would be served by having one collective/representative body for conservation. The motion to merge was carried. This initiated a new structure for conservation through a new organisation, managed by a chief executive officer. It marked a natural end of the first phase of the development of the practice of paper conservation. Analysing the debate that ensued helps better understand the transcendental nature of conservation – the value that sets it apart as a professional practice.

All eleven people interviewed for this study were questioned as to their experience and opinion of the convergence process. Archival documentation relating to the merger was consulted, as were publications produced by the IPC and the other conservation organisations that had merged.

#### **4.5.2 Background**

The National Council for Conservation-Restoration (NCCR) was established in 1993, when ten professional conservation bodies from the UK and Ireland came together to explore areas of commonality and to promote greater cooperation. The ten bodies were: the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), the Scottish Society for Conservation and Restoration (SSCR), the Irish Professional Conservators' and Restorers' Association (IPCRA), the Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Ireland (ICHAWI), the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC), the Photographic Materials



Conservation Group (PhMCG), the British Antique Furniture Restorers' Association (BAFRA), the British Association of Paintings Conservator-Restorers (BAPCR), the Society of Archivists (SoA) and the Natural Sciences Conservation Group (NSCG). Two other bodies later joined the process and these were the Care of Collections Forum (CCF) and the British Horological Institute (BHI).

Convergence was supported by the Museums and Galleries Commission, and by both Leigh and Milner, the respective managers of the Conservation Unit (see the Conservation Unit case study). Prior to this, the groups representing conservation had little direct contact. The Conservation Unit had facilitated the first direct contact between many of the groups in 1987, when it brought together all those involved in the accreditation process. The Unit hosted a symposium on accreditation on 3 November 1987, which was the first time that the various representative bodies had the opportunity to meet.

The NCCR took responsibility from the Conservation Unit when it was wound up for the management of the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR), the joint scheme by which conservators could become accredited. Also in that year, the National Council for Conservation-Restoration changed its name to the Conservation Forum.

In its 2001-2003 strategy outline, *NCCR: A Strategy for Conservation and Restoration in the UK and Ireland, 2001-2003*, there is no mention of convergence as a goal. Milner was asked to chair the group at the start of 2002, and she stated that she would be interested if the group agreed to seriously explore the possibility of converging. She had long felt that conservation was too fractured, with too many representative bodies duplicating activities. She had become convinced of this during her time as head of the Conservation Unit, and she had published her thoughts on this, as aforementioned, in the Conservation Unit's newsletter. Milner believed that the fragmentation of representation had led to a lack of influence and profile for conservation. She maintained that government bodies did not want to deal with a number of sectoral representative bodies and, consequently, conservation was losing out. Following on from this there was a period of intense debate at committee level.

Milner's intervention was critical to the progress of convergence. Just as Buchanan had made the establishment of the accreditation process his goal for the IPC, so Milner made convergence her goal for the NCCR. Her experience as an oil-painting conservator and an administrator in both France and the UK, as well as her work with NGOs, amply qualified her to oversee such a development. On 25 March 2002, she chaired her first meeting, a critical one, in which the then committee of the NCCR agreed to set aside sectoral and individual interests to consider what values the groups had in common and if it was a realistic option to merge.

This meeting led to an agreement to explore a new shared purpose, to dissolve existing structures and form one new collective body. In doing so, participants attempted to promote the good of the conservation profession above the sectoral interests of the various representative bodies. Another outcome was that the groups agreed that all future enquiries and exploration should be frank, generous and responsible, with full collaboration between the NCCR's members and the organisations that they represented. The corollary of this suggests that up to this point, there had been some disagreement, and there was a need to change the attitudes of the NCCR's members if progress were to be made.

At the outset, the vision was to set up one independent professional body to represent approximately four thousand conservators, covering all specialisms across the UK and Ireland. The proposed body aimed to assume the strategic-leadership role for the sector, and it would be energetic and creative in promoting its aims. It was envisaged that in time this body would be a chartered institute, approved by a privy council. Advocacy for conservation, an aspect that had particularly suffered because of the sector's fractured nature, was a key aim of the proposed body.

There was duplication across all of the twelve conservation-representative bodies, with each attempting to administer its membership on a voluntary basis. The number of

representative bodies were recognised as a barrier contributing to achieving consensus within conservation. As noted in the Conservation Unit case study and supported by Milner in the Conservation Unit newsletter in 1995, one single representative body would advance the ambitions of these bodies greatly and make it easier for state bodies to work with the conservation sector. State-supported organisations found it difficult to assist the conservation sector again due to the diverse number of representative bodies. Finally, at a time when advocacy was identified as a key future skill for any representative body, having twelve representative bodies was seen as hampering progress. Despite this overriding logic, there was a reluctance and resistance to change. It was most trenchant amongst members of the Institute of Paper Conservation. The reasons for this were unclear. Understanding paper conservators' resistance to this proposed merger provides valuable insight into how the sector manages change.

#### **4.5.3 Development**

At the outset, a statement of accord was produced to outline and summarise the discussions and progress made by the NCCR in its discussions about convergence. This document was approved for circulation at the May meeting of the NCCR, only two months after which the group had agreed to explore the possibility of merging. Considerable progress had been made in a short space of time. This news was circulated to the memberships of the different groups through their newsletters and publications.

The NCCR was successful in securing financial support from the Anna Plowden Trust, to enable the process of convergence to proceed. The funding was very significant in that it not only provided resources to enable the process to continue, but it also showed how one organisation could be successful in applying for and securing money. In a sense, it proved one of the key arguments in favour of the proposed merger, and one of the key attributes of the new organisation. The support secured from this trust was evidence of the benefits of convergence.

Once discussion of a merger began, it quickly became apparent how little was known about the collective resources of conservation in the United Kingdom at the time. Work had been undertaken and published by Winsor, but it did not address important membership issues, such as the number of conservators, those who were members of more than one representative body, or the number of members who were resident outside of the United Kingdom. Some of the representative organisations employed a secretary, while others undertook this role on a voluntary basis. Many conservators were members of more than one representative organisation. One of the first tasks was to determine the extent of this. A resource analysis was undertaken by Zoe Reid, the representative of the Irish Professional Conservators' and Restorers' Association (IPCRA), to determine the level of resources across all twelve representative organisations. Reid's work helped identify the resources and structures of the various bodies, giving a snapshot of the differences between them and highlighting the benefits of scale from a potential merger.

As is apparent in their titles, the twelve representative organisations were constituted around particular conservation practices, by geographic location, by materials, or as a subsection of another discipline. Each group had developed using its own philosophy of support for its members, and all had varying resources, depending on the size of their individual memberships. For example, some of the representative groups-maintained libraries, which were quite substantial, whereas others did not. This reflects the different approaches of the representative organisations as to the dissemination of information and knowledge amongst their members. Some groups were described by one of the respondents as being 'trade associations', whereas s/he regarded others, as being structured academic like professions.

In each case, the wide variety of structures was observed as part of a survey undertaken by a vanguard committee. The findings, which were confirmed by respondents, showed that each representative organisation operated within its own unique infrastructure. No two were similar and the resources available to each representative body varied widely. Comparisons of the various representative bodies were made across a series of categories: legal status, membership, membership categories, income and expenditure, the bodies that maintained libraries, those that employed people, the number of hours that those people

worked each week, the bodies that had publications, and those that organised conferences and events.

There were many different types of membership, and each organisation operated its own membership structure. It included accredited conservator-restorer, low-income, unwaged, full, institutional associate student, and other categories of membership. Some organisations had different membership charges for UK-based conservators, those from the EU, and those from the rest of the world. To further complicate matters, some of the organisations had different membership charges for accredited conservator-restorers who were either lowly waged or unwaged, and different categories of membership for UK, EU and rest-of-the-world members. Reviewing the membership information contained therein, it is obvious how fractured the various groups were. The argument for greater cohesiveness throughout the sector was easy to make.

The membership of each group was analysed to identify those conservators who were members of more than one organisation. Some individuals were members of recognised materials-based disciplines while being members of representative groups that were geographically based. Significantly, too, overseas memberships were recorded separated to give a realistic idea of the number of UK-based conservators across the different groups. This detailed specific information would be vital if the merger thereof was to go ahead. The membership subscription was the key income component of any proposed group, and it was necessary to quantify the membership so that the financial feasibility of the new organisation could be planned.

The IPC had an overall membership of 1,308, of which 717 members were based outside the UK. It had an income of £94,620, which was made up from subscriptions, against an expenditure of approximately £53,000. This size of membership made it the second-largest representative organisation, after the UKIC, which had a membership of 1,562, of which only 164 members were based overseas. The collective membership across all the representative bodies was 4,279, of which 947 members were based overseas. If one

excludes the IPCRA and ICHAWI membership on the basis that those organisations were based outside the UK, then the overall membership was comprised of 3,100 conservators.

The research undertaken by Winsor of the Museums and Galleries Commission confirms these findings. Within the public sector, Winsor found 1,021 conservators working in 151 public-sector museums or related institutions, and approximately 1,992 conservators working in 661 private practices. Two relevant points were made in his attempts to assess the overall numbers working in the sector: firstly, that not all conservators are necessarily members of a representative body; and, secondly, that reports into this sector have relied on the voluntary responses of individuals and institutions, and these were not always forthcoming.

Extrapolating this data and these numbers, it is obvious that conservation had at least 3,000 individual members working within their chosen sectors at the turn of the twentieth century. This showed considerable growth over the time frame of the aforementioned reports, and the findings were confirmed by the NCCR's subsequent research into the structures of the representative bodies.

What was apparent from financial information gleaned by the vanguard committee was that the representative organisations collectively made a considerable profit, with a collective income of £478,574 and a collective expenditure of £173,719, giving it a significant profit for the year. This income stream was one of the key drivers for the merger of the five bodies. Without it, the new institute, ICON, would have been very difficult to adequately fund.

A concurrent investigation was undertaken to determine the new structure that would best suite conservation. At an early stage of the process, there was a clear intention to avoid being prescriptive about the final structure. Colleran then Chairperson of the NCCR noted that the NCCR had consulted a wide variety of bodies with experience of convergence and charity issues. A number of organisations that had knowledge of mergers were invited to

give short talks on their experiences to the NCCR committee, as it strived to utilise this information (*Paper Conservation News*, 2002).

Two editorials published during this period, in the IPC and the UKIC newsletters, were very different in their tones. Colleran emphasised some of the obstacles faced by the representative bodies in trying to advance paper conservation as a discipline. This was in contrast to the approach taken by the UKIC. The difference between the two was probably due to the degree of resistance faced by both chairmen. Colleran specifically noted that the PACR scheme, which had just been established by the NCCR, was one of seven within the wider conservation community, and this number would make it difficult for the general public to navigate. What concerned her was that the PACR scheme was being extended to include preventative conservators and the collections-care route. She believed that paper conservators were losing ground to these other professional areas. Their livelihood was under threat, with paper conservation's previous position being eroded by other, diverse activities within the museum sector (*Paper Conservation News*, 2002).

Three separate management-consultancy firms with experience in the area of merging charitable organisations were interviewed, and the services of one company BlueSpark was retained. This reflects an ongoing concern within the other case studies namely that of paper conservators' use of external consultants. BlueSpark was asked to produce a consultative document to explain the proposed merger and gauge the level of support for the project within the wider conservation community. Telephone interviews were conducted with twenty-five conservators, and their views canvassed.

Issues that were of concern to these conservators about the merger were identified and addressed within the consultative document. It detailed the case in favour of the merger and included a short questionnaire for members to fill out and return. The feedback from this was analysed and quantified. Over 4,000 copies of the document were distributed, and 445 completed feedback sheets were returned. A 20% response rate from individual members (that is, excluding corporate members and cultural bodies like libraries and galleries) was received and considered 'excellent and betokens serious engagement with

the issues by a significant number of the IPC' (UKIC, 2004). Interestingly of the number of respondents that replied 59% of them belonged to just one representative organisation and 30% were members of two organisations. One individual belonged to six separate organisations. These figures highlight the membership crossover between the different representative organisations.

Some 86% of the Bluespark respondents agreed with the twenty-one-point plan outlined in the document, charting the way forward. The three topics that caused the most concern to respondents were the representation of the two Irish delegates on the board, the balance between regional and national representation (as opposed to the representation of technical interests), and the matter of a patron being appointed to an individual body. This was a very positive response as confirmed in the editorial in *Conservation News*. Individually written responses were submitted from members, ranging in length from one to six pages. The editorial noted that the comments were largely mixed, and 'those with something negative to say expressed their views more vehemently than those who were supportive'.

Four groups were chosen to form what was called the Vanguard Group: the IPC, the UKIC, the Scottish Society for Conservation and Restoration (SSCR) and the Photographic Materials Conservation Group (PhMCG). Of the original ten representative groups, these were the ones that felt that they had the best chance of succeeding as one body. The Care of Collections Forum (CCF) eventually joined, making it the fifth body to merge. The decision to take the process forward was partially based on feedback from the BlueSpark report, and partially from contact that those driving the process in each of the organisations had with their members. These five bodies felt that there was enough support and enthusiasm for the idea of a merger from within their memberships that it was worthwhile pursuing to its end. The other organisations had a variety of reasons that prevented them from being able to realise the merger.

Only five of the final twelve representative groups merged. Others, like the IPCRA and the ICHAWI, encountered geographical and political obstacles, and the Society of Archivists (SoA) could not gain any clear advantage by merging. The latter was a distinct,



separate professional entity. Its involvement with the NCCR was because it simply represented a sizeable contingent of archive conservators. It was unreasonable to expect this group to separate from its overall body, the SoA, and impossible to envisage a situation in which the representative body of archivists would merge with that of conservators. Others, like the painting and furniture conservation groups, were seen more as trade associations than representative professional bodies, and as such, they were never going to be easily accommodated within the new structure. They also had a different ethos towards conservation, one that was not congruent with the other bodies.

The Vanguard Group had a collective membership of 3,168 individual members – IPC, 1,308; UKIC, 1,502; SSCR, 220; and PhMCG, 138 – and, judging by the resource document produced, it had a potential income from membership in excess of £200,000. This grouping was seen as being viable, and one that could be sustained in the long term. The subsequent addition of the CCF added another 180 members to the overall membership total.

From within the Vanguard Group, resistance to the merger came primarily from the individual members of the IPC, and particularly from those who had been involved in its establishment. By its own admission, this group made a concerted effort to oppose the move and block its progress. The resistance was so determined, and, at times, emotional, that it came to a point of litigation. One respondent mentioned that, in 2004, the level and nature of the criticism that some of the committee members were receiving from those against the merger led them to consider taking legal action to stop it.

The objection to the merger centred on the argument of a loss of professional identity. The resisters argued that the IPC was a strong, successful organisation that had a very strong identity based around the practice of paper conservation. They mentioned how valuable they found the newsletters and journals, and how these were very useful in communicating with conservators. One respondent had a specific criticism relating to the way in which he felt that the new organisation was to be structured, and that the subscriptions should go to the groups, and not to the central executive of ICON. The respondent raised the issue with

the NCCR committee, and, to its credit, it recognised the merit in his suggestion and changed the structure of the new organisation to reflect this.

The membership of the five different representative bodies that comprised the Vanguard Group voted on whether to accept the proposals to merge. The vote was overwhelmingly in favour of acceptance. An interim governing body was established, drawing on membership from the different groups, and its first meeting took place on 12 October 2004. Within a year, all five bodies became subsumed into the new body. The Institute of Conservation, or ICON was established.

When convergence took place, in 2005, there was a clear vision as to how the organisation should develop. Concomitantly there was a realisation that the future development of the new organisation should be entrusted to individuals not involved with the process up to that point - in essence a new management structure. This was a logical next step. Many of the individuals had invested considerable time and resources to make the merger happen. However it was deemed questionable to pass on responsibility for this separate new structure without some continuity from those who were responsible for its conception and design.

In 2005, Colleran finished her term as Chairperson of the IPC and was succeeded by Helen Lindsay. In her first editorial in *Paper Conservation News*, in June 2005, Lindsay declared that it was an interesting position in which she found herself, as chair of an organisation that would not exist in a few months. Her reviews of the IPC newsletter throughout the 1980s and 1990s identified three consistent problems faced by conservators: that they were 'not being listened to, not being paid enough and not understood' (*Paper Conservation News*, 2005). Lindsay maintained that perhaps it was time for a new approach. By joining fellow conservators, ICON was the start of a new approach and a fresh attempt to address the questions of conservation that were of concern to all.

Convergence was a major achievement for conservation. The merger of the five bodies was a bold and brave step, realised through the vision and efforts of a small group of conservators. When it was first proposed, its success was not a forgone conclusion. It was only realised through the dedication, commitment and hard work of the NCCR committee and all the various volunteers who advised the group and undertook roles as necessary. In particular, the IPC's choice to merge was a brave one, in the face of such unrelenting criticism from within its own membership. The criticism had merit, but the membership clearly opted to choose a change path thus challenging the status quo.

#### **4.5.4 Analysis**

An analysis of the factors contributing to and inhibiting the development of the convergence process, as mentioned by the interviewees, was undertaken. The information for this was extracted from interviews via the coding process, as outlined in the previous chapter.

Initially, the factors contributing to the change were examined. What was unusual about this analysis was that there were twice as many factors that were critical of the development as there were in favour of it. This is probably because many of the interviewees were strong opponents of the change and continued to be vocal in their resistance to convergence, even after ICON, the new organisation, had been in operation for some time.

Curiously, one of the interviewees was a central figure involved in realising the change, and s/he was critical, at that time, of the direction taken by the new organisation, ICON. When the interviews took place, as has been noted elsewhere, the organisation had just appointed its new chief executive. There was a degree of disappointment apparent in the interviewees, amongst those in favour of the change and those opposed to the direction that the new organisation had taken.

Of the fourteen factors supporting notion of the five bodies converging, two had an external focus: the need for greater advocacy, and the potential threat to conservation from changes in the wider museum sector. Advocacy was highlighted as a critical factor to the future development of conservation. It was considered important to be able, as a voluntary representative body, to promote the message of conservation, both to the government, for funding, and to the public. The other externally focused factor in favour of the development related to changes in the wider administration structures of the museum sector. The remaining factors were all internally focused and revolved around three themes: firstly, the benefits of scale to be gained by the merger; secondly, the advantage of one strong voice for conservation; and, finally, the advantages of the change to the overall operation of conservation.

Of the twenty-four factors in opposition to the convergence process, all were internally focused. A large percentage of these were vitriolic in nature, with accusations of 'skulduggery' being made against the vanguard committee, and that it was an exercise in nepotism, to provide jobs for key favoured individuals. Within these comments were deeply held criticisms imbued with a high degree of passion for conservation. However, these criticisms lacked a clear, logical critique.

When reviewing the factors in favour of the change, apart from the individual motivating factors, all the remaining are structurally based. These were proposed gains through divisions of scale, and the benefits of one strong organisation. When the factors mentioned against the development were analysed, of the twenty-five collated, practically all were emotive and of a personal nature.

Analysing the factors from an organisational-change approach, one key factor in favour of the change was the personal commitment by many individuals, ensuring that the change succeeded. Individuals who originally championed the idea and those who championed it within paper conservation were mentioned as being central to ensuring that convergence was accepted, implemented and realised. By contrast, the one identity noted within the resistors to the change was the same factor. A respondent mentioned that convergence

amounted to a few people imposing their agenda on the membership. Both of these factors are essentially a debate about a key characteristic of the IPC, namely how it changes.

Issues relating to how others from outside the organisation saw conservation also surfaced in the factors. There was a perception that the IPC was in a precarious situation, with its finances in some disarray and its membership declining. This was how paper conservation was perceived by others outside of the sector. The IPC was a member of the National Council for Conservation-Restoration, and other bodies within this organisation had been discussing rationalisation for some time. They held the view that the IPC needed a degree of rationalisation. The remaining issues all related to structural changes within the IPC.

One interviewee was critical of the structure of ICON and proposed a change which was accepted. However, in time, this suggestion was reconsidered and rescinded much to the chagrin of the interviewee. They considered this change a retrograde step, and s/he became emotional when recounting the rejection.

One interviewee mentioned that it was important that paper conservation be seen to be doing the right thing, at the right time, and in the right place. S/he describing it as 'a fitness for and of purpose' and that the subsequent merger was perceived as just that. Another interviewee noted that the relationship between the groups and the chairperson was critical to the success of the new organisation.

There was an overall belief amongst those in favour of the merger that the new organisation would better promote conservation. One conservator who was critical of the change mentioned that s/he thought that the new organisation had promoted the Big Idea of conservation while ignoring the support and promotion of conservators and conservation in general.

The cost of merging with the other bodies was significant to paper conservators, who lost their direct representative body, their journal and their newsletter. There was a commitment to continue publishing *The Paper Conservator*. However, it merged with the UKIC's journal after some time. There were certainly gains for paper conservation under the new collective body, but conservators sacrificed a lot for their support.

Convergence was a further attempt by conservation to better its overall organisational structures, improving how it related to its stakeholders and further developing its professional structure. At its core was the notion that one strong voice would best represent conservation, rather than the disparate multiple voices that were present prior to its existence. Convergence proposed to facilitate better communication between conservation and the statutory bodies by the provision of one group. There was also a recognition that organisations must develop greater advocate particularly when dealing with state funding bodies. It was believed that a merged group such as ICON would be very effective in this regard.

One former chairman of the IPC, when interviewed about this time, stated that he remembered that it was quite clear that if conservation wanted to have any kind of influence anywhere, the profession had to speak with one voice. He remembered meeting with a departmental representative who maintained that s/he did not want to speak to six people representing six organisations to garner consensus on a conservation topic. They had an expectation that one person would represent and talk on behalf of the whole profession. This comment shows a degree of contact with the state and an understanding that the profession, by being too fractured, was at a disadvantage when dealing with state bodies.

The catalyst for convergence was Milner and the evolving role of the Conservation Forum. Milner had been involved with the Conservation Unit, and she had taken a sabbatical from conservation when her time with the Unit had ended. When the Conservation Forum was looking for a new chairperson in early 2002, she was approached, and she took the post on one condition: that the group explore the possibility of merging, providing one overall

body to represent conservation. The Forum had begun to take a more active role in developing conservation generally, as evidenced by its management of the PACR process.

Milner aptly observes that the conservators with whom she had experience were, by and large, extraordinary people, highly dedicated to doing things properly and right within conservation. Milner took much of this for granted, but it was confirmed to her when she moved into another career after the completion of the convergence process. Her initial involvement in supporting the Conservation Forum as head of the Conservation Unit is the closest that the process got to receiving support, directly or indirectly, from the state or its agencies.

The strongest resistance to the idea of a merger came from paper conservators. Their main argument against it was that it would negatively affect the representation of paper conservation if it went ahead. The conservators argued that the IPC had been a very successful organisation, and very effective in representing the interests of its members, so why would one want to change that? The Institute had seceded from the UKIC and this caused a degree of friction between both organisations. There was a lingering degree of animosity between both organisations which fed through to resistance to the idea of the convergence of the IPC. Many paper conservators were reluctant to merge with UKIC because of the history between the two organisations. The nature of the process and the speed with which it took place seem to have also antagonised paper conservators, as some complained that they felt railroaded into the merger.

The seemingly precarious nature of the IPC's operation was advanced as a reason for merging. It was argued by those in favour of the merger that the members and income of the IPC had been reducing, and that its future was under threat unless there was a change. They argued that the convergence of the various representative groups would secure this future.

In contrast to this, a variety of arguments were advanced by respondents in resistance to the change. Many of these arguments were the personal impressions of individuals towards the process, and there is little evidence to support them. Some saw the process as being implemented too quickly, and with not enough debate. Others considered it 'skulduggery and complete manipulation', that the process was a 'jobs for the boys' exercise. Another considered it part of a change movement that included accreditation, to which s/he was opposed.

Milner recognised the difficulties experienced by critics of the merger. She knew that the representative bodies were very important to their members. She described the paintings group, of which she was a member, as being like a family: 'It was like home. I used to love going to their meetings. It was like friends and family, like going home.' Milner also recognised that she was asking a lot of those who were against the idea of a merger, and that it was a difficult choice, fraught with uncertainty.

Of the twelve different bodies that entered into merger talks, five eventually merged into the one organisation, ICON. The fact that the merger was achieved, and within the time frame in which it was realised, is testament to the tenacity and dedication of the group of committed conservators engaged in the process. It also marks a growing strength in the position of the conservation administrator, a position that had been emerging, but was only realised with the establishment of the new organisation. Milner was advised of the considerable difficulty in trying to achieve a merger of this type by Bluespark, the change-management company that the Conservation Forum had engaged to help it support the change process.

There was something of a misguided opinion, reflected in the interviews, that the IPC was the largest organisation in the Vanguard Group. In fact, the UKIC group had more members. The IPC was the largest specialist group within the United Kingdom. Another area of contention was the cash reserve of the IPC, which would be part of the merger process. There were various sums mentioned, but the most probable amount was £30,000 (NCCR, 2002).



Many of those who were critical of the merger felt that the IPC was bringing too many resources to the table, compared to others. As aforementioned, the critics also alluded to the fact that the IPC had seceded from the UKIC in the late 1970s, and none of them could see the advantage to merging with it now. Finally, the critics disagreed with the notion that one body for conservation would have a great advantage over the current structure of the IPC. This contrasted with the almost diametrically opposed view held by the executive of the IPC at the time.

Colleran stated that the attitude of other professionals with whom conservators dealt in the wider museum sector was that conservators were always saying no. Colleran contended that the IPC was floundering as an organisation, and that its membership had fallen, reducing its income significantly. In September 2002, the death of Clare Hampson occurred. Hampson was one of the founding members of the IPC, and she had been its secretary for twenty-six years. She had a very cohesive influence on the organisation, and her death was a huge loss to the association at a very critical time in its development. This event, further supports the argument in favour of merging the five bodies.

The criticisms advanced by those opposed to the merger were not without foundation. Merging would lead to a loss of identity. Effectively, the new group, ICON, would be comprised of over 1,000 paper conservators – the highest individual specialisation – and no consideration was given for this within the organisation's overall structure.

The debate within the paper-conservation group was fractious and divisive. This type of debate has been highlighted in the case studies sections of this research. Understanding its root cause leads one to examine the motivation of a conservator, the passion that s/he has for what s/he does and the difficulties faced by the sector. In short, the debate identified a culture unique to paper conservation.

The objective of convergence was to create one single strong representative body that would act on behalf of conservation. It achieved this by persuasion and by promoting the benefits that would accrue to the wider conservation community as a result of the merger. It relied on conservators being able to put sectoral interests aside in favour of the benefits that might accrue to the movement as a whole.

These benefits did not lessen the arguments made by those who were against the merger. However, they did lead to a dilution of the representation of the paper-conservation sector. Paper conservation became one practice amongst many within the new organisation. As aforementioned, suggestions were made to improve the overall structure of the new organisation to make it more representative of the various groups. Suggestions made by a conservator were initially accepted but later rescinded, much to his/her disappointment.

There was a price to pay for the manner in which the debate was conducted. The merger took place, but many paper conservators opted not to join the new group. Of the twelve individuals interviewed for this research project, four were opposed to convergence, and the vehemence of their resistance had not dissipated with the passage of time. If someone was accredited as a member of the IPC and did not want to join the new organisation, s/he effectively lost his/her accreditation, further alienating himself/herself from ICON.

The role played by the Conservation Forum was central to achieving the change within conservation. The Forum was responsible for the PACR system, achieved through a high degree of cooperation between the three bodies that established it, all of which were members of the Forum. Because of the success of this process, it was somewhat inevitable that further projects requiring the cooperation and involvement of the IPC would be proposed. A full merger of all of the Forum members was probably overambitious. However, there was a logic to the proposal that, once stated, was difficult for those committed to conservation to refute.

At the heart of the debate about convergence was the question of the benefits of collective independence and identity versus the advantages provided by specialist representation. Which took priority: being a conservator, or being a paper conservator? Was it more of an advantage to merge with fellow conservators, or was it better to remain an independent body, representing a specific practice?

Clearly, the vote in favour of the merger reinforced the potential gains to conservation as a whole, at the risk of diminishing its overall representation within the governing body. The convergence process can be traced back to the promotion of the professionalisation agenda by the initial committee of the IPC. It was somewhat ironic that some of the most fervent critics of the process were on that original committee. They clearly saw themselves, first and foremost, as paper conservators, and their focus was solely on the practice of paper conservation.

With the passage of time, the fervour of the debate somewhat slightly lessened. Both sides looked to the respective successes and failures of the new organisation to reinforce their own positions on the merger. Both sides of the debate had validity in their arguments.

The IPC, as has been determined, was a very effective specialist representative body, representing its members' interests and promoting its core objective, conservation. It represented a select element of the overall discipline of conservation, and it did so very effectively. It had membership of approximately 1,200 conservators at the time of its demise, and over 50% of its membership came from outside of the United Kingdom. Those who objected to the convergence process looked to the failings of ICON to confirm their original opposition. Many of these failings were passionately recounted as part of the case study interviews and they seemed to have only slightly lessened over the passage of time.

Those in favour of the merger championed the logic of a single body for conservation, and when it was realised, they celebrated its success. They strongly argued that logically one

representative body far outweighed the advantage that a single practice-based representative body could achieve, and that the merger held huge potential benefits for conservation as a whole. Those who were supportive of the change looked to the successes of the new organisation to justify it.

This case study reflects a conflict that arose around professional advancement and the original emphasis of the representative association. Both sides were polarised into two very contrasting views: one that focused on the greater good of the practice of paper conservation, and the other on conservation as a collective discipline. The debate was eventually settled by the vote taken to accept the merger voted through by the majority of the IPC's members.

#### **4.5.5 Conclusion**

Convergence was realised because of the overriding logic of the proposal and the significant cooperation that developed in the years prior to it being proposed. There was a clear move away from the stand-alone representative body, which solely looked after the needs of its own members, to a greater emphasis on the needs of the practice of conservation as a whole. The success of the accreditation process fuelled greater cross-conservation interaction and cooperation amongst the representative bodies, which made the proposal to merge all the more reasonable and attractive.

Although paper conservators could have decided to reject the proposed merger, the fact that they did not further strengthens the assessment of the move towards greater overall conservation cooperation. The gain for conservation was the ongoing advantage of being represented by one collective body.

One of the main purposes of this research is to ascertain the transcendent value in conservation and how it relates to its professionalisation. The effort of the individuals involved in the merger process, and the support and belief given to them by their

individual memberships, clearly demonstrates how this value is present in conservation. The fractured debate within the IPC reflects the passion within paper conservation, as evidenced throughout all the case studies relating to direct changes within – a passion that is necessary if an everyday working task is to be more than a mundane chore.

## 4.6 MA in Preventative Conservation

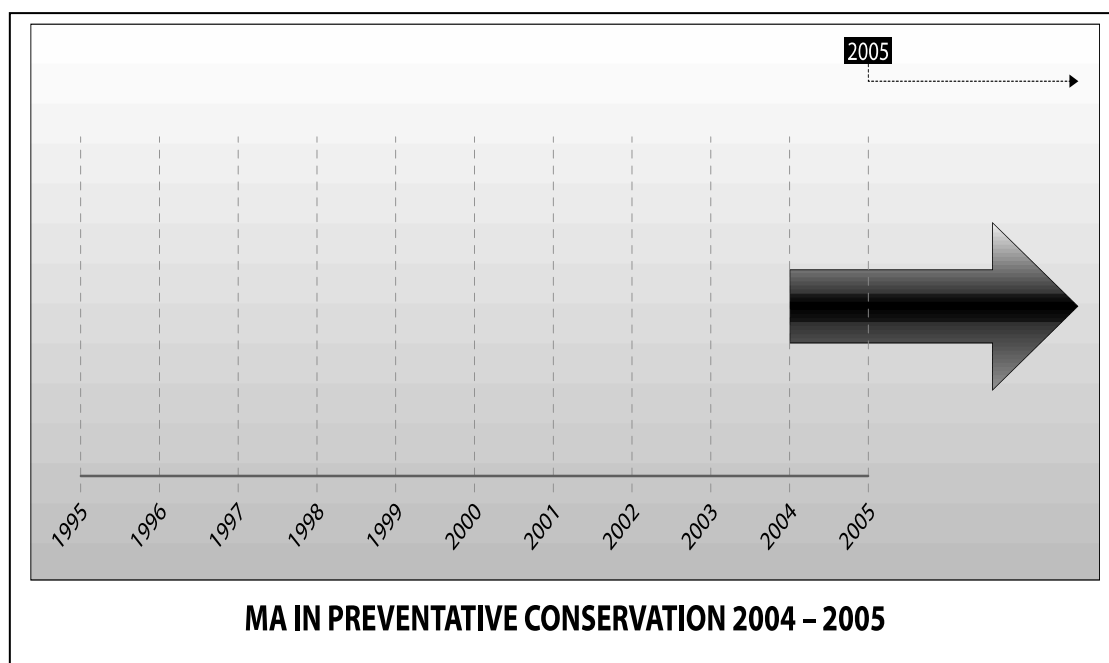


Figure 4.6: Timeline for MA in Preventative Conservation

### 4.6.1 Introduction

This case examines the debate that has surrounded the establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation at Northumbria University. Established by Jean Brown in 2005, it was the first course to offer specialist education in what was then an emerging discipline: preventative conservation. This case examines the reasons for the establishment of the course and some of the issues that the university faced in trying to get it established.

This new development took place as part of a wider debate surrounding the provision of quality education and training for emerging conservators, and it is impossible to examine one without recourse to the other. Within paper conservation, a debate has raged about the

quality and effectiveness of the various training courses on offer to student conservators since the establishment of the IPC. This has taken place between conservation educators and practitioners, and it has often been intense and emotional, reflecting a deep commitment on both sides.

The motivation of the education providers and the demands of conservators for quality education are central to this debate. Both groups strove to ensure that the best-quality outcome could be achieved, but both were frustrated by the limitations that each faced. This engendered a degree of friction between them at times.

Many restrictions, such as changing university structures, tightening budgets, and increasing student-to-lecturer ratios, ran counter to conservation's vocational nature. Conservation itself, at this time, was facing new and difficult challenges. Traditional lines of demarcation were breaking down, while the roles played by some conservators had developed beyond the disciplines in which they had originally qualified. By examining the positions of both, it is hoped that this case will provide an insight into the cultural aspirations and values of conservators, and, in turn, the overall transcendent nature of conservation.

This case study will examine three distinct areas of interest: the growth of preventative conservation, the dynamic associated with the establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation in Northumbria University, and the wider aspect of conservation education. This case study involved a semi-structured interview with a key individual associated with the course. Written sources, such as the course evaluation sheets, as well as academic publications about the course and the wider area of conservation education, were also consulted. Specialist literature on conservation education was also referenced to illustrate the debate.

#### **4.6.2 Background**

In 2005, Northumbria University commenced the master's degree programme in preventative conservation, offering students a postgraduate qualification in this area for the first time. At the time, the university managed two other courses: the MA in Paper Conservation, and the MA in Oil-Painting Conservation. The future of these two courses was in doubt, as a review of their student-to-teacher ratios highlighted how few students there were to teachers, compared to other courses within the university. The courses came under considerable pressure to change or face closure.

The course was organised by Jean Brown in recognition of the need to provide quality training and a growing demand for credentials from practitioners of preventative conservation. There had been an awareness of the need for such an academic course for some time. A previous proposal for a similar degree course had been made by the Camberwell College of Arts in 1995, but this failed to secure college validation.

Preventative conservation had evolved as a distinct discipline and encompassed a number of different museum roles, primarily centred on an evolving understanding and appreciation of collections management. However, conservators had, for some time, been responsible for implementing preventative-conservation programmes within museums and galleries. There was a growing recognition of the value of such interventions, and conservators, for the most part, were charged with designing, championing and implementing them (Thompson, 1978; Cassar 1994) .

The MA in Preventative Conservation was the first formal academic qualification offered in this field. The importance for preventative conservation was recognised in many other conservation training courses, with many offering modules dealing with aspects of preventative conservation. The primary aim of these courses was to develop particular skills within conservation, centred on materials at the core of created objects, such as oil-painting, textile or ceramic conservation, to name but three. Preventative conservation, although important, was not viewed as significant enough to have its own training course



– not until Northumbria University organised its own. Its formation marks a maturity of this area and of conservation as a whole.

Contemporary historical research into the development of preventative conservation begins in the 1920s, with the experience of the British Museum in storing its collections during the First World War. Dr Scott established the British Museum's Research Laboratory, which carried out research into the causes of storage-damage marks – the natural starting point for modern-day preventative conservation. Having a laboratory within a museum dedicated to scientific analysis and the research of environmental problems arguably gave the United Kingdom an advantage in this area.

Preventative conservation developed out of a greater understanding of how to care for large collections of objects, and the recognition that it was more prudent to prevent damage from occurring, rather than having to correct it. Preventative conservation involved interventions that maintained and improved the overall condition of collections. Caple (2012) states, 'It includes all measures taken to preserve an object short of specific interventions with the physical forms of the object'. Bradley (1997) asserted that most of the problems of collections care were alluded to by the 1950s, but Caple qualifies that although they may have been alluded to, the institutions lacked the resources, personnel or understanding to address them.

Greater understanding and momentum within this field was provided in 1978, with the publication of Thomson's *The Museum Environment* (1978). This was probably the single most important development within the area of preventative conservation, in that its publication coincided with a groundswell of interest in this area, and many individuals within museums found themselves trying to promote the need for good environmental control. It generated an understanding of preventative conservation and proposed workable solutions to museums interested in controlling the damaging environmental elements to which their collections were being exposed. Part scientific textbook, part how-to manual, this book had a huge impact when it was first published. It provided a clear,

easy-to-follow set of interventions with distinct limits that those working in the field could adopt as their targets.

By the beginning of the 1990s, the practice of preventative conservation had progressed from a simple rule-based intervention to a sophisticated balancing of the various facets of museum operation. Many individuals working in this area had started in a conservation specialism and gradually undertaken the role of preventative conservator. Others, such as curators, museum administrators, and even volunteers, had found themselves performing a preventative-conservation role (Cassar 1994; Ankersmit, and Strappers 2009) .

Conservation Unit, she was struck by the numbers of institutions that did not have access to a conservator. Milner became aware that some 2,000 institutions had no direct contact with a conservator, and that the collections themselves were being looked after primarily by volunteers. To empower them, she organised and published *Ours for Keeps? A Resource Pack for Raising Awareness of Conservation and Collection Care* to provide information about preventative conservation specifically to this sector.

Preventative conservation aims to minimise the risk to an object by providing proper storage and the control of environmental elements that have an impact on the overall well-being of the collection. Each object was provided with a storage container that safely housed it, and this, in turn, was stored within another, thus providing safe, dust-free protection. When asked about the most significant change that he had encountered in his time as a conservator, Oddy, former head of conservation at the British Museum, said that the provision of individual storage for each item – in itself a preventative-conservation measure – was singularly the biggest and most important change that he had experienced over his lifetime, working as an objects conservator. The increased importance and development of preventative conservation are reflected in Oddy's (2009) comments.

The debate about the quality of training available to conservators has been raging for some time. In fact, it is a topic that has constantly been debated since conservation emerged as a

fully fledged practice. We have seen, in the IPC case study, how the questioning of courses centred around the quality of what was on offer to students and/or whether the courses were simply advocating an old-school restoration approach, but calling it conservation training. Helen Lindsay, the final chairperson of the IPC, noted that the quality of trainees emerging from training courses was a recurring topic within the newsletter throughout its existence, and the relationship between conservators and educators had been fractious, as evidenced in the formation of the IPC.

By 2005, the practice of conservation was the accepted norm within museums. The practice of preventative conservation has emerged as a separate discipline, to the point where Northumbria University was offering a training course to those working in the area. This case study will examine the debate around the establishment of this course and, by doing so, elicit a greater understanding of the impact of conservation education on the profession as a whole (Ankersmit, and Strappers 2009) .

#### **4.6.3 Description**

In its validation documentation, the overall aim of the MA in Preventative Conservation is stated as being ‘to engage in critical, analytical, historical and comparative study of movable cultural heritage in order to identify, develop and implement appropriate policies or procedures for the care of collections. It aimed to prepare students to fill a variety of emerging roles within the museum, gallery, and historic-properties sectors, including collections managers, environmental managers and preventative conservators. The course outline notes that it was consistent with the guidelines for this sector, as proposed by the UKIC.

Initially offered as a one-year full-time or a two-year part-time course, Northumbria University went on to develop a distance-learning option. Structured to be deliverable, in part, in a modular form over the university’s intranet, it became possible to offer the course to students outside of the United Kingdom.

Preventative conservation practitioners come from a variety of backgrounds. Preventative conservation was seen as a cross-disciplinary subject, and students were expected to have a primary degree, with the most common being conservation, chemistry, fine art and art history. Some had been trained conservators, others had been conscientious curators with responsibility for collections, while others, again, had been performing other roles within museums and simply inherited responsibility for caring for the collections. This case study's interviewee observed that many museums had no conservator on staff, and that responsibility for care of the collections, in many cases, resided with volunteers or museum employees with little experience of conservation.

The course offered students the opportunity to engage in all aspects of the preventative-conservation agenda. It aimed at providing them with an understanding of the factors that impacted on the overall condition of a cultural object or a collection of objects. Students were required to be able to devise and implement a suitable strategy of care, depending on their findings and the long-term needs of the object. In doing so, they had to have a sound understanding of the cultural object, its creation, and its multiple meanings. They were also expected to understand the potential threats that art objects faced and be in a position to devise solutions to minimise the environmental impact on them. Course evaluations noted the prospect of employment upon completion of the course, within the museum, gallery, and historic-properties sector.

The MA in Preventative Conservation was deliberately structured to meet an accessibility agenda in education. Many potential students were not in a position to give up work to attend university on a full-time basis, so the part-time option was a most effective choice course delivery option. Many were not able to attend university simply because of their location, so the distance-learning module was an attractive option. Many students from outside the UK chose this option and went on to secure an academic qualification within the area.

At the time of the course's inception, the use of information technology to deliver course content was innovative within universities. By extension it was considered extremely innovative within the conservation arenas. This innovation came from the various platforms on which the course could be accessed, including smartphones, laptops and desktop PCs, enabling students to access content whenever best suited them. The modules were unique and constructed to convey key concepts relating to preventative conservation. No other conservation course used information technology in this manner and its new approach naturally led to a degree of resistance. Lectures given by visiting lecturers were recorded with their permission and used as part of the future curriculum, thus availing of knowledge reuse. By using this modular approach, the course could be delivered across different platforms as they developed, from computer to tablet to, ultimately, smartphone, which was of great benefit to students.

#### **4.6.4 Analysis**

Of the eleven factors in support of the development of the preventative-conservation course, two had an external focus. These were the notion that there was a risk to all conservation programmes within Northumbria University, resulting from reduced resources. The second factor related to the need for museums without access to conservation advice to implement preventative measures. The remainder were internally focused and relate to the needs of individuals already doing this work alongside structural aspects connected to the delivery of the course. Of the factors that inhibited the establishment of the course, nearly all were internally focused and personal in nature. There was an expressed desire for conservators to receive extensive hand-skill training in a more traditional manner.

If one factor can be singled out as an identity within these factors, it is the notion that Jean Brown initially tried to provide instruction into cleaning silver as part of the course. This was dropped because of resistance from some objects conservators. One might argue that this is a form of protectionism. Why should students of the course not be taught to clean

silver? In reality it connects to a larger debate within conservation relating to the qualifications and skill level needed to treat objects.

There was a clear opinion that universities had been subsidising conservation courses by keeping their student-to-teacher ratio low, when compared to other courses. It was believed that this practice had been going on for some time and, furthermore, that there was no recognition of it from conservators.

From the interviews with the respondent, two distinct themes emerged. The first dealt with aspects of the development of the MA in Preventative Conservation, while the second involved a defence of criticisms levelled at both the MA and the education system by the wider conservation community. It is reflective of the invidious position that conservation educators were in at that time, and this has been a constant theme for conservation educators. Restricted by limited resources, conservation educators can appreciate the gap between the skill level of new/emerging students demanded by the wider conservation community and what can realistically be provided. Discussions about the course naturally drifted to wider aspects of conservation education, which were animated, while the interview encompassed much of the passion, commitment and dedication that both sides of the debate have towards conservation. This case study naturally reflects that debate.

The establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation highlighted the development of a subsection of conservation practice that became an academically credited one. Preventative conservation had been emerging as a separate discipline for a considerable time. There had been growing emphasis on collections management – something that was highlighted as part of the Conservation Unit case study. There was a symbiotic relationship between preventative conservation and collections management. The establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation marked a maturity of this discipline. It also demonstrated conservation's ability to develop areas of new credentials – a requirement that Freidson (2001) recommended as being necessary for a profession to exist.

Paper conservators have always demanded high-quality calibre of graduates from the training universities. In the Establishment of the IPC case study, paper conservators engaged directly with course providers to comment on the quality of education for emerging conservators. This has been a theme within paper conservation since its inception. It reflects a standard for all aspects of conservation practice. Conservators are naturally very critical of any course that may produce graduates who do not meet the perceived entry level for the profession. One respondent argued strongly that these expectations were unrealistic and not achievable, given the resources available to the universities themselves. The respondent maintained that the universities had been unrealistically supporting conservation for too long. By maintaining the low student-to-lecturer ratio for as long as they had in the face of an economic logic that required it to be far higher, the universities had been propping up conservation for years. This was done without any recognition from within the profession for doing so.

The course offered students the opportunity to secure a formal qualification within the area of practice. However, some questioned its relevance, given that many were already employed within the sector. Those involved in organising the course believed that it had the effect of confirming the knowledge and practice of those working in the area of preventative conservation, and it enabled them to undertake further research into their chosen discipline, ultimately advancing knowledge about the area. For many students, the time flexibility of the course was very attractive because many could not give up work and attend university on a full-time basis. The flexible part-time and distance-learning options were very attractive to this sector. The course organisers had worked hard to make the distance-learning option as effective as possible, and they believed that this option provided a high-quality, engaging online experience. Students who undertook this option were found to be more committed and frequently outperformed students who opted for the on campus full-time and part-time options.

The delivery method came in for some criticism. The modular nature of the course and its delivery through a greater reliance on information technology was viewed as being part of

a continued reduction of access to lecturers and an overall reduction in direct-lecturer hours. This was refuted by the course organisers, who defended its modular structure and use of IT. Conservation training, because of its vocational nature, was seen by conservators as needing a high level of direct, one-on-one instruction with a practitioner. The reduced direct-lecture hours fed into a wider criticism of the overall reduction in standards of conservation training. In time, the modular system was adopted by the other two courses: the MA in Oil-Painting Conservation, and the MA in Paper Conservation. Much of the areas of commonality across all three, such as the theory of conservation, were rationalised and offered to all students as a common term, taken by all. This naturally led to a further criticism of a reduction in standards.

The course organisers considered conservators to be unrealistic in their expectations for the training courses, and that conservation in general refused to accept its fair share of responsibility towards providing training for students. In support of this criticism, medical practitioners were cited, noting that doctors had a much higher involvement in the training of medical students, providing them with much-needed mentoring and experience. Conservators, it was argued, were happy to criticise universities and the flaws they perceived in conservation education, but few were willing to provide the type of mentoring needed. Critics of the course were very quick to criticise, but equally unwilling to engage in providing realistic solutions to the problems faced by both sides in this debate.

The argument from many conservators employing new graduates was that their skills were not at a level that were considered sufficient. Conservation educators contended that it was not realistic to expect that a two-year MA in either paper or oil-painting conservation would be sufficient to impart the skills required to satisfy conservation's demand for graduates. The teaching of conservation is very demanding on academics' time. It needs a low pupil-to-teacher ratio, but the universities are demanding an ever-higher lecturer-to-pupil ratio, reflecting the financial break-even point of many courses.



When the course curriculum was being planned, it was proposed that the MA students be given instruction in how to clean silver objects. This developed the appeal of the course to include hands-on treatment while empowering those with the responsibility for dealing with such materials. Its inclusion was argued for, on the basis that many of the students would face the prospect of cleaning silver at some stage in their professional careers. One argument suggested that it would be better if they were shown how to do properly clean silver properly. This proposal met with resistance from conservators and had to be dropped. Critics of the course thought that this was a step too far, and that it was a task only to be undertaken by a trained conservator. Its inclusion was simply a line of demarcation for conservators because of the damage that an untrained or partially trained person can do to an object or a collection. Those who were critical of its inclusion considered themselves as promoting good conservation practice, and they had the well-being of the material and the collections at heart. Recognition must also be given to the commercial gain accruing to conservators by blocking partially trained individuals from undertaking this type of work. This incident illustrates some of conservators' direct antagonism towards the MA in Preventative Conservation, and it fuelled criticisms of conservation education further.

One key debate within the theory of professions involves the notion of social closure. Social closure attempts to restrict access to a professional activity by non-qualified individuals. Many researchers, most notably Larson (1977), claimed that this was for economic and social gains for the individuals involved. The supposition here is that, for personal gain, the profession controls access to itself by controlling the educational system and the credentials that accrue therein. Freidson (2001) widens the notion of social closure to give recognition to there being a relationship between social closure and the purpose of the profession. He also notes that for a profession to exist, it must be able to control the market so that it provides credentials, thus providing opportunity for the creation of new knowledge.

The direct control of education and subsequent entry to the profession is not within the direct control of conservation. Conservation is dependent on the state for the provision of practically all conservation education. What conservation has been able to do within the

recent past is to establish a criteria of entry to the profession for new entrants – that is, a level of education, generally an undergraduate degree, with a subsequent MA in a branch of conservation, followed by two years' work experience. Much of the progress on this has been made at a European level, with bodies such as the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (ECCO) being central to the setting of these standards.

There were synergistic gains across all three courses, not least that it increased the number of students undertaking them. The addition of twenty to thirty students to the MA in Preventative Conservation course, who were undertaking it in various ways, doubled the number of those on conservation-based courses, increasing the student-to-lecturer ratio and lessening the threat of course closure. In time, the pressure to become more efficient led to a rationalisation of all three conservation courses by Northumbria University. It led to a common first semester being developed, dealing with topics such as conservation ethics and theory, which students, no matter what their specialist choices, were required attended. This reduced duplication across all three courses, coupled with further rationalising the lecturers' time, provided greater efficiencies throughout all three courses, and strengthening the future viability of all three courses. Further efficiencies were gained through a conscious policy to reuse knowledge, and much emphasis was placed on making the courses as sustainable as possible. However, within the wider conservation community these changes were viewed as a retrograde step, in particular, the overall reduction in teaching hours and the reduction in the potential quality of the MA graduates.

Conservators had an input in devising and delivering the curriculum for each course. One interviewee noted that the creation of the curriculum is an iterative process between the course supervisor and contacts within the sector. Conservators working within the sector were consulted to identify the critical issues that need to be addressed by the curriculum and the skill sets needed from recent graduates, but the provision of the courses was limited by difficulties faced by the institutions in which they were hosted.

The existing training courses came under pressure because of changes in the pupil-to-teacher ratio within Northumbria University. One interviewee argued that the ratio had been kept artificially low in the past, with the university opting to commit considerably more resources to these courses than to others. In short, the interviewee maintained that the courses had been propped up – something for which the university got little or no recognition. The preferred ratio of students to lecturer was 20:1, whereas, the interviewee maintained, the old ratio was approximately 5:1.

The quality of education is a theme that runs through conservation, as witnessed in the establishment of the IPC and throughout the activities of the Conservation Unit. Having well-educated conservators is something that the conservation sector regards as critical to its proper, effective operation. This case study has echoes of the debate surrounding the membership rights of the IPC. We have already seen how the IPC had two roles: to promote the conservation message, and to look after the needs of its members. Similarly, by insisting that the standards of education are maintained at the highest level possible, conservation is promoting the needs of its students while forcing educational institutions to maintain as high a level of teaching as is possible.

There is dedication and passion on both sides of this debate. Unless there is change within the wider support for conservation education, this debate will remain unresolved. Clearly, it is in the interest of both sides of this debate to maintain the courses. How else would the thirty or so students who graduate each year receive their education in conservation? However, it cannot be conservation education at any cost, as this would be unfair to the students and conservation in general. The debate, as polarised as it is, reflects the commitment and passion on both sides towards quality within conservation, with the common factor being the maintenance of as high a standard as possible therein.

Hahn (2007) who conducted research into the future of conservation education within the United Kingdom also experienced a similar reaction when she conducted interviews with individuals involved in the conservation education sector. Her research explored the necessities for curriculum development within conservation education. Her information

gained in part through informal conversations with people involved in conservation training ‘were unconsciously strong, subjective and emotionally driven’. (appendix 1 pg v).

There is no evidence of personal gain for any of the individuals connected with conservation education. The sole emphasis is to train conservators so that they are best skilled to conserve objects. In this, there is a direct link between the core values of conservation, its professionalism, and the purpose of the course. The debate, as fervent as it was, was focused completely on the quality of conservation education. It concentrated on the quality of education and training that the individual students were to receive. Conservators questioned the potential value to conservation, of students emerging from the course and their suitability to engage with the sector, while those involved in the course argued that these were unrealistic demands, given the availability of resources. There was no evidence throughout this debate of any attempts to control access for social or economic gain. The motivation of both sides was to produce the best results, given the resources available. There was a consciousness that if the preventative-conservation course was not successful, then it would not have provided the extra students needed to boost the student-to-teacher ratio, and so would have put at risk the other two conservation courses in the college. The loss of these courses would have been a serious retrograde step for conservation in general.

#### **4.6.5 Conclusion**

The debate that surrounded the formation of the preventative-conservation course and, more importantly, the provision of a quality conservation education was not new. We have seen, in the previous case study into the formation of the Institute of Paper Conservation, how that group sent members of its committee to assess and validate education courses.

Two important factors emerged from this case study: Firstly the support given by the universities to conservation and the lack of recognition by conservators of this support and, secondly, the passion for conservation that is abundantly evident when one listens to those involved in the management of the course.

## Chapter Five: Cross-Case Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

This cross-case analysis extracts from all five case studies the patterns of data that were common to each. It compares all five across themes that were prevalent in more than one case, and, once analysed, the patterns should create a greater understanding thereof.

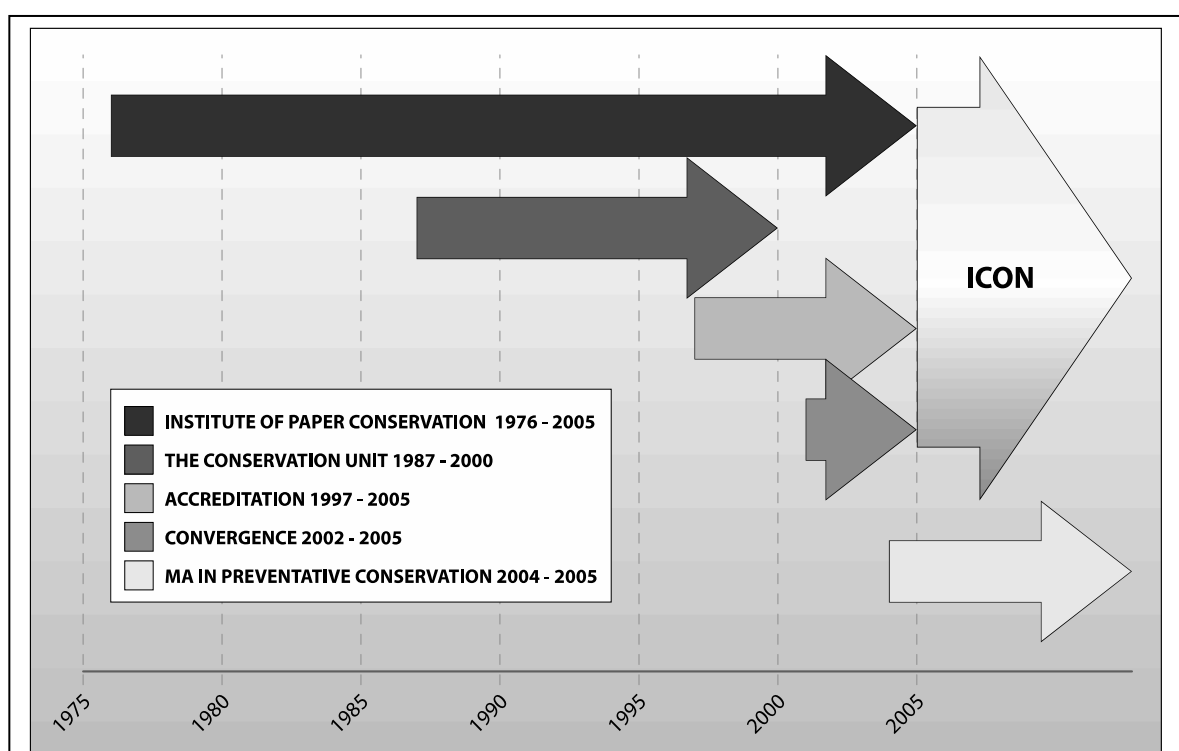


Figure 5.1: Timeline of the Five Case Studies

There were three stated aims at the beginning of this research: firstly, to determine the nature of change within the practice of conservation, with a view to producing a model that might better inform future change within the sector; and, secondly, to evaluate conservation and provide some insight into its nature, in order to see if it could be classed as an industry.

The literature review led to three key questions: What is the transcendent value or essence of the conservation profession? What is the nature of the relationship between conservation and the government, and how does it account for changes within the profession? Finally, how has the professionalisation of conservation impacted on practice?

The in-depth case-study interviews, alongside the archival documents relating to all five cases, have provided a wealth of data that contributes to our greater understanding of how conservation has developed. By analysing these data sources, it should be possible to address the aforementioned research aims and provide an insight into its true nature as a discipline.

## **5.2 Change across the Five Case Studies**

The five case studies profile five separate change events within conservation that were independent of each other yet related in time. From the analysis of the individual case studies, it is possible to identify similarities and common themes between them. A cross-case analysis that identifies such themes has the potential to further enhance our understanding of how paper conservation changed and the reason for such change.

Stretton (1969) noted that extending case-study investigation beyond one case and into multiple cases has the potential to promote new questions, reveal new dimensions, and generate models and ideals. Cross-case analysis seeks to construct and explain the similarities and differences between cases, and it can further articulate the concepts, hypotheses or theories within the individual ones. The issues associated with each case

study were detailed as part of each case analysis. By comparing the issues that have occurred across all five cases, in this instance, it is possible to generate a greater understanding of the topic at hand, as well as a greater insight into the nature of change within paper conservation.

It would be difficult to see how any of these change events could have occurred if the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC) had not been formed in 1975. Equally, without the representative bodies, there would not have been the degree of cohesiveness required for the Conservation Unit to operate. The Unit promoted preventative conservation-supported moves to establish the accreditation process and set up the Conservation Forum, which eventually led to convergence. So, although each event is independent, there is a relationship between all five. At the end of the time frame under review, there was a definite sense that the first phase of the establishment of the practice of conservation had come to an end, and that the next stage would witness its coming of age.

The value of the change is realised by an individual or group of individuals who initially champion it. The individuals are all conservators who have experience of working in other fields. They all understand the implications of the change in relation to how conservation operates and realise the benefits that could result. They communicate the value of this change to other relevant individuals, who accept it as a realisable, beneficial goal, and one of benefit. The proposed change is criticised by conservators, and, as we have seen with both the accreditation and convergence processes, this criticism can be vitriolic and highly emotional. This group then champions it amongst the remainder of the conservation community until it is accepted and realised. Realising the idea normally takes considerable time and resource commitment by the individuals championing the change, but the dedication to the idea is such that these individuals commit the necessary time to achieving the goal. In most cases, the origins of the idea and the individual(s) who championed it tend to be forgotten over time.

By aggressively championing the change within the wider group of conservators, it eventually becomes accepted and finally adopted. This process was very apparent in all



the case studies, with the exception of the Conservation Unit. All five case studies successfully introduced a change to the structures of conservation, which had an impact on how conservators related to each other, their clients and the general public.

Central to all five case studies was a ‘change champion’ or group of individuals who wanted to make a difference and who believed in the value of the change to the practice of conservation. The motivation of these individuals gave impetus to realising these ideas. A number of conservators, frustrated with their lack of representation within the existing associations and publications, came together to set up their own specialist representation association. Alan Buchanan made the establishment of a credible accreditation process the main priority of his tenure as chairperson of the IPC. The initiative for convergence can be attributed to Carole Milner and linked to her becoming chairperson of the National Council for Conservation-Restoration (NCCR). Prior to the establishment of the Conservation Unit, numerous individuals produced reports advocating for such a body. Finally, the quality of conservation education has been one of the most fiercely debated topics in conservation since its inception. The establishment of a dedicated course to teach preventative conservation was a milestone in conservation education and the development of conservation as a profession. There was no appreciative personal gain for any of the individuals promoting change. Their only apparent motive was the betterment of conservation.

If we examine the case studies concerning the establishment of the IPC and the accreditation and convergence processes, it becomes apparent that the time needed to set up each one was shortening – in effect, the rate of change was speeding up. Most interviewees commenting on the establishment of the IPC noted the 1980 conference as being a watershed in its development, some five years after the group’s first meeting. The accreditation process began in 1998, and the first accredited member under the Joint Accreditation Group emerged in 2000. Finally, the first mention of the convergence process was at a meeting on 25 March 2002, and by 2005, the new organisation, ICON, had been brought into existence. In all these case studies, the reduced time frame reflects an increased rate of change and the need for conservation to be more flexible and proactive.

This process began with an analysis of the establishment of the representative bodies and the various aspects of the development of a profession's structure. All five case studies analyse successful change events relating to the professionalism of conservation. They chart the development of the structures of the profession, from its formation to its establishment. Four of the cases relate to change events that occurred within conservation that had a direct impact on its structure/organisation. The remaining case study, the Conservation Unit, was a body set up to assist conservators, facilitate the development of conservation as a practice, and promote greater professionalism within conservation.

Conservators make decisions as a collective, and they claim the right to make these independently of any erroneous influence and in a way that they think is relevant. For example, our understanding of the theory of conservation – the ground rules that govern the nature of conservation interventions – is constantly being questioned and evaluated. Hence, there have been numerous revisions of the codes of ethics with which conservators are affiliated. This collective independence is present throughout the development of the conservation profession. Conservators have the right as a group, as well as the independence, to make decisions that determine how they develop. This collective independence is apparent throughout the various case studies and is a prerequisite of the profession, while it also highlights the strong identification that paper conservators have with the practice. This was evidenced across the four case studies directly related to the development of paper conservation, namely the establishment of the IPC, accreditation, convergence, and, finally, the MA in Preventative Conservation.

The notion of improving the professionalism of conservation is a central theme throughout all five cases. Inaugurated by the IPC, the continuing emphasis on the professionalisation of paper conservation is also evidenced therein. The Conservation Unit was specifically tasked to further the development of the professionalism of conservation. It played a central role in the accreditation and convergence processes and promoted preventative-conservation measures within museums – a measure that contributed to the need for the master's degree in preventative conservation.

One surprising factor observed across the cases was the degree of aggression associated with the change events. A significant element of hostility was present around the formation of the IPC, the convergence process and accreditation. The language used by some of the interviewees suggests that there was a very belligerent culture within conservation, particularly in the first few years of its operation. Three separate interviewees mentioned specific conflicts that occurred between conservators, and between curators and conservators, while all individuals interviewed about the convergence process acknowledged the difficult, acrimonious nature of the debate that surrounded it.

As the organisational structures of paper conservation developed, the practice became increasingly involved in wider conservation issues, with increased cooperation between the IPC and other representative groups. There was a shift in power, from paper conservation solely deciding its future to a shared vision of how conservation would develop in general. The IPC's involvement with the accreditation process marks the beginning of this process. The Conservation Forum (or, as it later became known, the NCCR) had responsibility for developing conservation through collective action. Being a member of the Forum further diluted its singular approach and opened it up to the prospect of a greater shared responsibility for the development of conservation.

Across all five case studies, one of the main points of conflict was with fellow conservators who disagreed with change. This resistance, on occasions, was very vocal, trenchant and personal. When the IPC was initially formed, it was known as the Paper Group, a subsidiary of the IIC-UKG. A combination of friction between members of both committees, difficulties with the statutes and structures of the IIC-UKG, and a can-do culture amongst paper conservators led to the Paper Group seceding from the IIC-UKG and establishing its own institute. Although little is written in the official documentation, interviewing individuals about this time clearly shows that there was much rancour between them.

The notion of momentum was cited by a number of interviewees as a reason for the change events' success, reflecting an expectation that change has to happen within a recognised, reasonable time frame. Otherwise, it runs the risk of failing, presumably because of inertia. However, the speed of change was considered a significant factor, in that it was mentioned by a number of interviewees across the case studies.

Another emerging theme was the lack of position parity between conservators and other colleagues in the museum sector. In fact, there was open hostility between some conservators and curators, and between conservators and some other museum professionals. A number of interviewees mentioned that they thought that conservators and the wider group were insecure within conservation, and amongst conservators as a whole. It was suggested that this lack of confidence was an issue relating to change, and significantly so, when it came to analysing practically all of the cases. One respondent remembered detecting a slight inferiority complex amongst conservators when s/he began working on the accreditation process.

Two people-based themes emerged throughout the analysis, and those were the considered use of individuals external to the practice of paper conservation and the experience of respondents interviewed about aspects outside of paper conservation. The IPC committee's use of chairpersons from outside paper conservation was a tradition that had immense benefits for the organisation. Efficient committee meetings ensued as a consequence, reducing the level of rancour between members and allowing them access to other resources and wider areas of the museum sector that could be of benefit. The use of external consultants had an impact on its development, the most notable of which was Lester's work on the accreditation process, and his subsequent involvement in setting the PACR standards as part of the joint accreditation system. BlueSpark was also consulted to advise on the merger process, and its input was also of value. Of the eleven individuals interviewed, ten had previous experience in areas other than conservation. The remainder held a variety of different positions, and paper conservation benefitted from this. Paper conservation's use of external consultants reflects an organisation that is aware of its own capabilities and limits, and one that was capable of seeking external professional support whenever the need arose.

There was a discernible growth in bureaucracy over the period under review. Three of the respondents interviewed as part of this research were administrators who, because of their involvement in the Conservation Unit, had a central role in relation to the development of conservation. The role of conservation administrator emerged over the period under review, and it was a position that became central to conservation's development, with the establishment of ICON. All three respondents were qualified conservators who undertook administrative roles, and all three had a significant bearing on the overall development of the practice.

Two separate respondents mentioned the fact that only 200 museums of the 2,000 institutions in the country had access to the services of a conservator. This meant that approximately 1,800 institutions were staffed by either museum workers or, more commonly, volunteers, and these were the individuals in whom the proper care of collections was vested. Many of these people had little or no access to, or experience of, conservation, and yet they were called upon to look after collections. This group became the focus of the second part of the Conservation Unit's operation, and it was a clearly identified target market for the MA in Preventative Conservation.

The core value of an organisation is a key enduring characteristic, and, as such, it is central to its identity. The independence of a conservator within the wider conservation movement was a core value – something that was apparent from the inauguration of the IPC and, indeed, across all the case studies, as evidenced by the tone and comments made by respondents. According to Freidson (2001), occupational independence of a profession is a prerequisite to its members' ability to perform good work, serving the transcendent value that it espouses. There were two separate types of independence observed, namely the independence of action by individual conservators in treating objects, and the independence of collective action by a group.

Other key characteristics identifiable as a pattern/series of similar values in the case studies include an emphasis on quality. This was a core tenet of paper conservation's practice and a discernible core identity in the activities of the representative body. Two other core identities were a focus on quality education within the sector and knowledge-generating activities designed to enhance the understanding of paper conservation's practice.

Finally, no mention of professionalism was found in the review of the minutes of the IPC, covering its first six years of operation. At no stage was it mentioned as a concept by the committee, and it was not until 1995 – reacting very much to developments in other, allied fields – that it produced its first five-year strategic plan. The lack of professionalism being mentioned is significant, in that it suggests that the developments were not regarded as being part of the professional process. The change represented by each case study was simply an incremental step to greater organisational ability. As such, the developments were innate, and not part of a considered, planned strategy.

As previously established, a profession has at its core a set of values with which individuals within that practice identify. Brandes (1984) notes that, for a profession to exist, it must have a set of values that individual members of the practice espouse or have in common. These values make the difference between the individuals of an occupation operating as sole traders and those operating as a profession. Within the practice of paper conservation, this change underpinned the theory of conservation, but it was, essentially, as outlined in Chapter One, defined by the notion of reversibility and minimum intervention. These core values bonded paper conservators together as a profession, as tenets with which all members of the group identified. Adherence to these common values was essential for paper conservators. Any dissent from these values was openly criticised.

Whereas reversibility and minimum intervention were apparent and discernible, there were other values that were important, but not as obvious. There was a pragmatism behind paper conservation's development that was apparent throughout the case studies. For example, one respondent noted that the original committee of the IPC considered

establishing paper conservation as a fully professional organisation, but rejected it because it considered it too expensive for its members. It was believed that the membership did not have the financial resources to support a professional structure. This pragmatic approach was also evident throughout the other case studies. There was a considerable degree of pragmatism associated with the accreditation process, when paper conservators attempted to reassure their service users of the quality of what they were providing. Their approach in doing so, through the establishment of an accreditation system, was realised in a practical and pragmatic way.

There was significant pressure, referred to by one of the interviewees, to conform to the core values, and there was a high level of aggression shown to individuals who put themselves forward as paper conservators but did not conform. In time, these values became an acceptable part of the profession of conservation, providing a commonality of purpose, which, for the emerging practice, was critical to its success. The case studies also illustrated how committed paper conservators were to develop knowledge about paper conservation and practice. The first committee of the IPC placed great emphasis on developing a greater understanding and knowledge of its practices and practitioners. Later, the IPC was asked to validate educational courses, ensuring that they conformed to the ideals of conservation. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the education of paper conservators was a central concern of the IPC. It spent considerable resources establishing and maintaining a library of paper-conservation articles and publications that those interested in the area could consult.

The IPC had a further function: to facilitate the development of knowledge through contact between its members and the exchange of information. With the establishment of the IPC, greater socialising occurred. Paper conservators met, socialised, swapped ideas, and organised training courses and, eventually, conferences. It quickly became the organiser of educational workshops and internationally attended conferences, which enabled it to facilitate cooperation between other conservation-based representative bodies, culminating in its eventual merger with four other pertinent bodies.

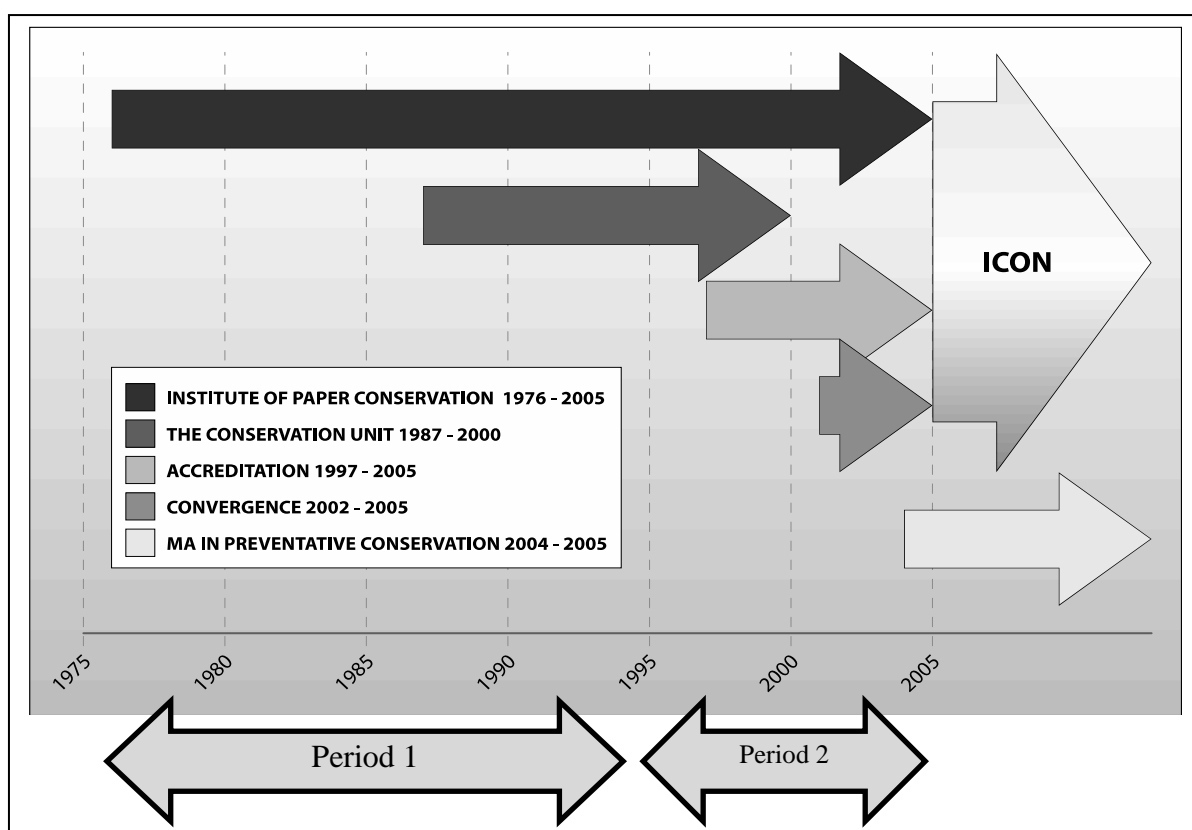
With the advent of the Conservation Unit came interventions to directly support paper conservators. Accreditation gave recognition to those who were committed to the practice. The MA in Preventative Conservation allowed those interested in securing an academic qualification in the field to do so. Each case study demonstrates a contribution to knowledge development within the organisation of paper conservation. This knowledge-generation policy focus continued throughout the development of paper conservation, and, significantly, it evolved to a point where the process of continuous professional improvement was incorporated into the accreditation process.

The focus on knowledge development provided a further, very strong identification between practice and professionalism. It fostered the understanding within paper conservation that being a good conservator meant being a good professional, and vice versa. The result was a very strong identification by paper conservators with practice. This was how paper conservation strove to be ‘significant’ as it developed as a profession. The strong identification with practice meant that any criticism or threat to the practice was taken as a personal slight. To further understand the role played by an identification with practice and its implication for the development of a profession, it was necessary to examine the research conducted into this aspect of professional development.

### **5.3 Patterns of Change**

Within the findings secured from the five case studies, it is possible to determine two separate eras of change in the period under review. The first era was from 1976, when the IPC was established, to 1995, when Leigh left the Conservation Unit and Milner took over as its chief executive. The second period was from the beginning of 1995 to the end of the period under review, 2005. The year 1995 represents a point of significant change, and it marks a new dynamic within the development of both paper conservation and the wider conservation movement. Table 5.3 highlights two separate time frames from the case-study data analysis – Period 1 and Period 2 – and the key features associated with each.





**Figure 5.2: Patterns of Change – Period 1 and Period 2**

### **5.3.1 Period 1**

The start of Period 1 is marked by the establishment of the IPC, and it is a time of emergence for paper conservation. At this stage, the profession could be described as emergent and transformative – emergent in that it was the beginning of the new practice of paper conservation, and transformative in that it was changing ideas about how paper-based cultural objects were treated in the past to how they should be treated in the future. There was a strong association between practice and organisational identity, reflected in the dual role of responding to members’ needs and following the organisation’s mandate to make paper conservation culturally significant. As evidenced from the quotes of the respondents, as an organisation, the IPC was considered ‘bold and bloody-minded’. It was regarded as being a confident, ambitious, single-minded representative group that was almost evangelical about the practice of paper conservation. Alongside this, the IPC

emphasised quality within its practice and overall organisation, and in its contact with other groups. The success of the Joint Paper Conference between the IPC and the Society of Archivists is testament to this.

Period 1 followed a policy of knowledge generation from the outset. Within paper-conservation theory and the conservation movement as a whole, there was a constant questioning of the theoretical basis on which decisions were based. The focus on knowledge generation was reflected in the establishment of the library, conferences and workshops of the IPC, and the esteem with which its journal and newsletter were held. It also focused on improving training and education for emerging paper conservators.

Finally, the early part of Period 1 is characterised by the amount of conflict between paper conservators and curators, other types of conservators, and other paper conservators themselves. This can be partially attributed to the emergence of the new discipline, however, it also reinforces the notion that there was a strong relationship between paper conservators and the practice's organisational goals.

The IPC had a concentrated, narrow focus that promoted the benefits of a conservation approach when treating works of art on paper. Its focus was the promotion of paper conservation, and it had little input into the wider development of the conservation sector itself. The animosity between the two groups, the IPC and the UKIC, continued, and it was a barrier to cooperation.

The Brandes report (1984) recognised the need for greater sectoral development and made recommendations to establish just such a body to tackle this deficit. The activities of the Conservation Unit in its first phase of operation can be regarded as addressing a sectoral deficit, the result of the narrow approach used by the IPC and other representative bodies at the time. Clearly, there was an opinion that there had been a failure to sufficiently develop the necessary structures of conservation, and this was endorsed at the highest level within government. This is what the Conservation Unit endeavoured to do, and its

early policies addressed this issue. For example, in its inaugural year, it hosted a meeting between the parties interested in developing an accreditation process – significantly, the first official meeting of all the representative bodies on record.

For the first eight years of its operation, from 1987 to 1995, the Conservation Unit focused on intervening to support the supply side of conservation, with policies that provided direct support to conservators working in both public and private practice. It followed a similar policy to that of the IPC around the development and examination of knowledge, which was reflected in the establishment of its library, the publication of a journal of conservation research, and, finally, its association with the Getty Library Conservation Abstract Database. The Conservation Unit, similarly to the IPC, prioritised the improvement of education and training. It drew up a register of conservation courses and tried to establish standards. This approach had a dual focus: to support both practice and practitioners, and to support the operation of paper conservation throughout Period 1.

### **5.3.2 Period 2**

Period 2 began in 1995, with the appointment of Milner as head of the Conservation Unit. There was a perceived shift in emphasis in how the Unit intervened to assist conservation. This was characterised by a movement from supply-side to demand-side interventions. The impetus for this change came, according to two respondents, in part from recommendations to further integrate the Unit into the overall activities of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC), and as the result of a perceived need to develop preventative-conservation measures within the museum sector. Milner also undertook an extensive survey of the conservation needs of the sector, consulting widely with museum managers, curators, conservators and technicians to gauge the situation in relation to conservation and see what improvement measures could be implemented.

Two respondents recalled an incident in which the existence of the Unit was questioned by a visiting junior minister, highlighting a change in policy from the administration, which commissioned and acted upon the recommendations of the Brandes report. Where there

had been governmental interest some years previously, in Period 1, it waned in Period 2, with no new initiatives being introduced therein. The MGC was replaced in 2000 with a new organisation, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and although this did promote conservation, its role was reduced, compared to that of the Conservation Unit.

One significant fact emerged at this time, partly as a result of Milner's survey, and partly as a result of research undertaken by the MGC: of the 2,000 museums in operation in the UK at the time, only about 200 had access to conservators, either employed or on a contract basis. The collections within the remaining museums were cared for mainly by volunteers. This group was targeted by a specifically designed publication, *Ours for Keeps? A Resource Pack for Raising Awareness of Conservation and Collection Care*. Significantly, this group of volunteers was also viewed as a target market for the master's degree in preventative conservation.

The second period, as acknowledged earlier, was noted for an acceleration in the pace of change, along with a higher concentration of events taking place. Greater cooperation amongst the representative bodies began with the successful accreditation process, and this provided a base of cooperation that later enabled five representative bodies to merge. The background to the establishment of the accreditation process highlights the growth of conservation in the private sector, quantified by both Peter Winsor's (1998) and Zoë Reid's (2002) research as having just over 1,500 conservators in total.

Accreditation's express aim was to provide users of the service with quality assurances, but it went further, incorporating continuous professional development into the process. The professional structure of paper conservation changed to accommodate the demands of the client base. This reflected a changing theoretical emphasis characterised by a shift from objective- to subjective-based conservation interventions. The focus moved from a continued emphasis on practice and the promotion of paper-conservation values to an increased emphasis on collections management and preventative-conservation intervention. The practice of paper conservation moved from being emergent and

transformative to a more normative development, as the values espoused had been accepted.

There was a perceived shift in emphasis throughout the lifetime of the IPC, from a representative body with a narrow focus on its specialist practice to a more open organisation, which engaged with the wider conservation community. This process of wider engagement mirrors a similar change within the working focus of paper conservators. As paper conservation emerged as a discipline, it mainly involved individuals working directly on objects, conserving them, and placing them on display or in storage. This is what became known as benchwork.

With the passage of time, the role of the paper conservator within organisations has developed greatly, to the point where benchwork is only a small fraction of many conservators' working lives. One respondent remarked that it was possible for a newly qualified paper conservator to work for many years before ever conserving, or even handling, a paper-based object. This move from specialisation to a more open, professional engagement is reflected within the activities and focus of the IPC.

## **5.4 The Case-Study Model application to this research**

In Chapter Three, Yin's (1993) five-stage model of case study planning was selected and the case study followed this template when organising. Yin's (1993) five-stage model for case-study research design, was considered a relevant structure that this research could follow. The model features a series of steps, which, if followed, can organise and regulate case-study research. It provides a degree of standardisation that can facilitate a good research outcome.

The case study should not be regarded as a method of research in and of itself, but, rather, a design frame that incorporates a number of methods (Stake, 2005). For Yin (1993), one of the key considerations was the case question being investigated. Wisker (2001) maintained that both the case-study phenomenon – that is, the case question – and its

context must be examined. The case question should outline what exactly is being investigated.

In this instance, the key aim of this research is to ascertain the nature of the change that occurred in paper conservation over the time frame under review. An overriding factor that impacted on this change was paper conservation's use of the professionalisation process to organise and promote its aims and the wider aims of conservation, both internally, i.e. amongst its own members, and amongst other stakeholders within the museum sector. The case questions have provided data about the nature of change across the time frame under review.

The research into the professions was criticised for its lack of definition and understanding of change. To better understand the nature of change into the professions, this research has looked to an allied field of study – organisational change – because that research discipline has developed mechanisms that allow for an investigation of change within organisations. These mechanisms attempt to investigate the attitude of individuals within an organisation towards the change before it happens and after it takes place (Stake, 2005).

Yin (1993) held that the proposition being examined should be within the scope of the study itself. The scope of the study was tightly defined at the beginning of this research, with the main subject of interest being the practice of paper conservation within the United Kingdom over a thirty-year period. The aim of the research was to investigate how change had taken place therein. Thus, the proposition investigated remained well within the scope of the research.

One of the proposed outcomes of the research was to illustrate a change model that would reflect and better illustrate how change takes place within paper conservation, so proposing a model is congruent with the intention of this research. As outlined in Chapter Three, the central factor in each case study was the individual involved and his/her experience of the incident(s) of change.

The purpose of the model should be to illustrate, in a simple graphic form, how change has taken place in the past. This model should be useable by the individuals charged with

implementing change within conservation in the future, so the proposal thereof is fully congruent with the aims of this research.

For Yin (1993), the unit of analysis within each case study was also important. The unit of analysis across all the case studies was the nature of the change that has taken place in conservation. The case studies themselves have provided an abundance of information, and the analysis of the data collected has provided insight into the nature of this change. A similar pattern of change was discernible across the case studies, and this model is designed to reflect that. It divides the change process into four stages: recognition from outsiders, enhanced identity, image deficit, and changes in professional structures. It is also considerate of the feedback loop that takes place with those outside of conservation.

According to Yin (1993), there needed to be a logic linking the data gathered to the proposition being investigated. Eisenhardt (1989) maintains that each case study acts as a distinctive experiment that stands on its own as a unit of analysis. Multiple case studies serve as replications, contrasts and extensions to the emerging theory. This emerging theory must be identifiable within the individual case studies and replicated throughout all undertaken (Yin, 1994; Wisker, 2001).

The data that was relied upon to form the case studies was extracted from interviews with relevant parties connected to the various change events. Triangulation of this data and other data sources was conducted, and key factors relating to the change events were highlighted. The pattern of change within each case study was independently determined. Once completed, the pattern of change within each case was compared and the overall similarities determined. Subsequently, Yin (1993) maintained that the criteria for interpreting the findings were important.

Wisker (2001) maintained that groups of research objects or findings should be grouped across multiple case studies, so that conclusions can be identified. Once identified, theoretical frameworks can be realised, providing an explanation for the case studies encountered. A comparison of the patterns of change common to all five case studies was undertaken, and this formed the theoretical basis for the change model devised. The pattern of change was discernible within the five case studies, reflecting the nature of

professional change that has occurred in paper conservation, and conservation in general, across the time frame under review.

The outcome of this research is a hybrid, combining, as it does, the logic and understanding of research into the professions and professionalism, and that of organisational change, with the experience of paper conservators. It is an attempt to provide research into the professions and professionalism with a mechanism, whereby the impression of individuals involved with change within the development of a profession can be analysed and understood. This was identified as lacking in the initial stages of this research project. It is the intention of the model to provide a greater understanding of a complex issue while adding to what is already known about the professions and professionalism.

## 5.5 Model of Conservation Change

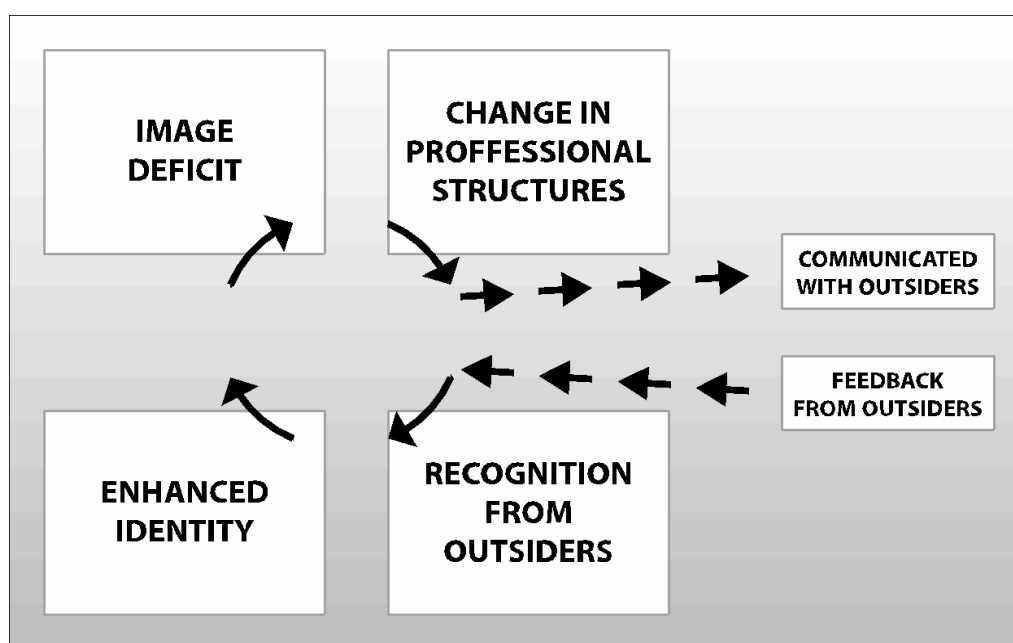


Figure 5.3: Model for Conservation Change

An identifiable pattern of change was observed across the five case studies. This was previously outlined, at the start of Section 5.2, Change across the Five Case Studies. In



each case, it was possible to identify a deterioration in the image of paper conservation that led to a change in the way it operated. The deterioration in image led to a decline in the identity of paper conservation, which, in turn, acted as a trigger for action amongst paper conservators and within conservation in general. The model is a graphic representation of the work of Dutton and Dukerich (1991), and it reflects the approach taken by Coram and Burnes (2001), who advocated the ‘iterative, cyclical process involving diagnosis, action and evaluation’ towards change. It is also derived from the data and information collected from the five case studies and the patterns of change evidenced within.

### **5.5.1 Image Deficit**

This was an iterative process that started with the recognition of image loss. This image loss was recognised by the individual ‘change champion’, and s/he communicated the need and benefits of change for paper conservation to the wider group. There was a perception, across all the case studies, of a reduction in recognition for paper conservation. In each case study, the image deficit was considered by paper conservators as being important and worth addressing. When the IPC was established, there was a willingness on the part of paper conservators to organise in the same way as their colleagues within other branches of conservation had done. They believed that such a structure would give them credibility when trying to promote the message of conservation. In each case, as aforementioned, a change was made. In the case of the establishment of the IPC, a new set of structures enabled paper conservators to interact and learn. The accreditation process gave recognition to best practice and reassurance to those using the service.

### **5.5.2 Change in Professional Structures**

In each case, a change in the structures of the profession took place. With convergence, it was probably the most dramatic change, in that five representative bodies merged into one overall organisation. With the establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation, the

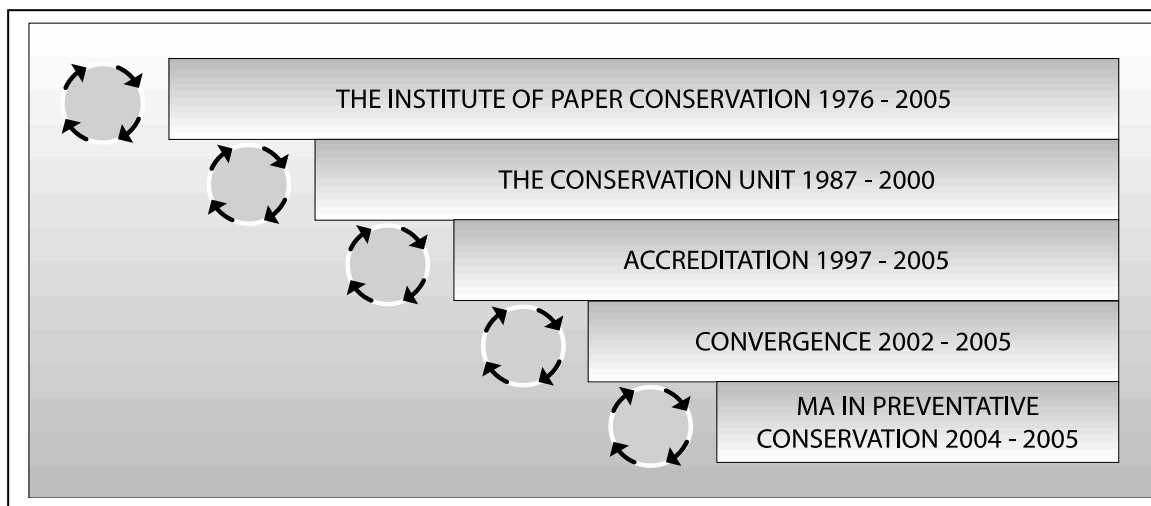
new structure was essentially a new master's degree course in education. Each case study represents some change in the professional structure of the organisation.

### **5.5.3 Recognition from Outsiders**

Recognition of the value of the change was received from those outside the sector, and this was apparent in relation to each of the case studies. There was a return to conservation for the change made. In the case of the establishment of the IPC, the confirmation of the rightness of its approach came with the success of the joint conference organised with the Society of Archivists (SOA). The feedback received by the organising committee involved in this joint conference was extremely positive and confirmed that there was a considerable interest, both within the United Kingdom and abroad, in paper conservation. Criticism had been levelled at IPC members at a recent meeting between both groups, the IPC and the SOA, and this made the success of the conference even more relevant. For the accreditation process, recognition of the success of the change came from the fact that Israeli conservators decided to copy the process and set up their own identical accreditation process. This success confirmed that the change, in the manner in which it had happened, was the right choice. This response can be witnessed in all of the case studies.

### **5.5.4 Enhanced Identity**

Paper conservation was considerate of the feedback that it received, acting upon it to embed the change. By making it a distinctive characteristic of the organisation, change became part of its identity. The efforts to make a success of the convergence process – to turn it from being something to which conservators had agreed on to an effective representative organisation – have been immense. It is unlikely that paper conservation will ever revoke its accreditation process. The process itself might be reviewed or updated, but it is not likely to be rescinded. In all of the five instances addressed by the case studies, the ambition for the change was very high. Realising the change was one part of the process. Making it acceptable and permanent took considerable time and resources.



**Figure 5.4: Model of Change over the Research Time Frame**

Figure 5.4 illustrates how the same approach by paper conservation has enabled it to develop an organisational ability to change when necessary, and to improve the professional structures therein. Each section is dependent on the one that came before it, but the model also reflects conservation's ability to facilitate and manage change.

Figure 5.4 illustrates how the proposed change model is at the core of each change that happened within the development of paper conservation. In addition, it illustrates how each change event was related to the others. As previously stated, each event was dependent on the previous event. Accreditation could not have happened unless there had been a representative body of some sort, so it was dependent on the establishment of the IPC. Equally, if the Conservation Unit had not brought the various conservation-representative bodies together in November of 1987 and facilitated the establishment of the NCCR (later renamed the Conservation Forum), then it is questionable as to whether convergence could have occurred.

The model provides a representation of how change has taken place within paper conservation over time, but it provides little insight into the logic driving this change at the time it occurred. While this model provides a factual representation of how paper conservation changed, it does little to highlight *why* this change took place. To fully understand why conservation has changed, we must explore the implications of the strong identification with practice that was apparent amongst paper conservators. To do this, we must revisit the understanding of a profession and consider how paper conservation has developed in relation to it.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

A discernible pattern of change was recorded across all five case studies. This pattern was analysed, and it was possible to discern further subdivision within it, in the form of two key periods: Period 1 and Period 2. These were distinct patterns of change within the overall time frame under review, with unique characteristics attributed to each period. The model for change that was proposed and described in this chapter was an attempt to synthesise the recognisable patterns of change in the data collected, and this model was applicable to all five case studies, hence the final figure, which illustrates how this model applied over time.

The cross-case analysis provides us with a detailed overview of the way in which paper conservation has changed over the period under review. An overall analysis of the change that has taken place in the development of paper conservation over the period under review has highlighted two distinct periods of change. These are significant, in that they reflect an underlying/prevailing attitude and a shift in that attitude at a particular point in time.

If we consider that the establishment of ICON was the start of another phase of development, we are effectively observing the beginning and the end of two distinct

phases of change within the research into how paper conservation has changed, with the start of the third phase marked by the establishment of ICON.

What characterises both phases of change was an observable alteration in the external factors relating to paper conservation. The change took place as part of an innate need within paper conservation to address the demands of the environment in which it operated, and the changes observed relate to the three questions central to this research.

There was a perceived need to be more considerate of clients – particularly by paper conservators working in a private capacity – hence the successful implementation of the accreditation process. Buchanan (2001) argued that accreditation provided assurance to the users of paper conservation's services, and that it had nothing to do with how a conservator conserved an object – it simply provided confirmation to a potential client that if s/he used the services of an accredited paper conservator, then those services would be of a certain standard. It is worth noting, however, that this shift in attitude represents a move towards a more objective focus within conservation.

During the first phase, the government recognised the need to intervene and assist with the development of the conservation sector, and it committed resources to achieving this aim. This was not the case during the second period. The attitude of two conservators involved with the Conservation Unit was noteworthy. Both thought that this made complete, logical sense.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This study set out to determine how the conservation of paper-based cultural objects had changed over a thirty-year period, from 1975 to 2005. It identified the professionalisation process as being one of the fundamental ways in which change happened within paper conservation. An analysis of this process provides a greater understanding of how paper conservation has developed and changed, and why it happened when it did. This has a value to those planning future conservation interventions, and it has a potential impact on other areas of conservation practice.

The data provided by the case-study analysis and the corresponding archival sources highlights patterns of change that have occurred within paper conservation, from its inauguration in 1975 to its demise as an organisation in 2005. In the previous chapter, the beliefs and values that formed conservation's ideology were analysed. These were identified from the data secured from the in-depth case-study interviews, combined with a corresponding analysis of the other data sources. They provide insights into the values that pertained to conservation at different times, and from this a discernible pattern of change is noticeable and can be analysed. This analysis provides a greater insight into the three research questions identified from the literature review, as outlined in Chapter Two.

The three research questions were: What is the transcendent value or essence of the conservation profession? What is the nature of the relationship between conservation and the government, and how does it account for changes within the profession? Finally, how has the professionalisation of conservation impacted on practice?

The model illustrating change in Chapter 5 reflects the process by which it happened. This was represented as an iterative, four-stage process in which the change was

communicated, with feedback collected from the wider museum community. What this model lacks, however, is any explanation about why the change happened. To understand this, the motivation of the individuals involved in the process needs to be examined. This enables the logic of the change to be understood, and it should further enhance the previously illustrated model for change.

What this research initially aimed to explore was how paper conservation used the professionalisation process to achieve its objectives. Paper conservators had placed considerable emphasis on professionalising, and it was identified as one of the main factors for change within the occupation. This research set out to provide new insights into how conservation changed and what caused these changes to occur, as they related to developments in paper conservation over time. By consulting literature on the professions, professionalism, and the professionalisation process, it was expected that parallels might be found to explain the logic of how and why paper conservation changed and developed.

In Chapter Two, the concept of full professional status was outlined. Occupations such as medicine, law and engineering were regularly proposed as examples of true or traditional professions. Conservation cannot be considered as having achieved a full professional status, in that it never reached the status of one of the traditional professions. This was highlighted by some of the interviewees and from the documentation consulted about how paper conservation has evolved.

Two main difficulties were encountered while trying to ascertain how paper conservation has developed as a profession: firstly, there was a lack of agreed definition as to what a profession was, and, secondly, there were very few tools that could facilitate the analysis of a profession and its development.

The concept of what it means to be a profession has changed and constantly evolved over time because of ongoing research into this topic. Freidson (1994) highlighted that the notion of a profession is a folk concept (Freidson, 1970), and effectively one that changes

over time and in response to changes in the environment in which it operates. It is not a static entity, and this changing dynamic is reflected in the four-stage model of professional development outlined in Chapter Two. This model outlines how the definition of a profession has continued to evolve and has done so over the course of the time frame of this research. It also illustrates the degree of difficulty that researchers working in this field experience when trying to define aspects of a profession's operation and structure. This continuing development gives rise to the potential for other professional models.

To counter the lack of tools required to investigate a profession, the research area of organisational change was consulted. This enabled key organisational images and identities reflecting the development of paper conservation as a profession to be highlighted. By contrasting the development of paper conservation with that of the emerging theoretical research into the professions occurring over time, our understanding of change in the professionalism of paper conservation is enhanced. It should enable one to understand why paper conservation placed so much emphasis on professionalising, its motivation, and the intent that was present when this change occurred.

Considering the profession as an organisation opens up the possibility of using organisational analysis as a means of understanding how and why a profession changes and develops. Organisational identity is a framework of beliefs, values and feelings held by individuals within that organisation. It is not static, but formed by multiple connections that depend on interactions with the immediate and wider community (de Bruin, 2000). From this interaction, individual values are formed. These play an important role in the formation of an organisation's identity, and these change in relation to interactions with other members of the profession and those outside of it.

At the start of Chapter Four, it was highlighted how individual or personal values are described as being social principles, goals and standards that members of a culture believe have intrinsic worth. Values are standards that individuals seek to achieve. They are normally lofty ideals, like truthfulness, loyalty or charity. A belief is a more enduring value, and it is something that a person holds to be true. Beliefs are less likely to change.



Sometimes they can be strongly held, and these can influence an individual's behaviour and that of the organisation of which s/he is a part.

Conservation's organisational identity – that is, the combination of its centrally enduring, distinct characteristics as an organisation – was apparent across the five case studies, and there was a deeply held belief in the rightness of the paper-conservation approach. In Chapter Five, the values common to all five case studies were highlighted and combined, and the trend found therein was used to formulate the organisational identity of conservation. This identity included a strong emphasis on quality. Also included was a strong identity with education and training, as well as knowledge-generation strategies aimed at further understanding aspects of paper conservation.

Other values encountered throughout the case studies seem to have been especially relevant to one of the three key questions of this research, which was to determine the nature of the transcendent value of conservation. The 'transcendent value', according to Freidson (2001), is the key to a profession. It is a core attribute, unique and common to the individual profession, that propels it beyond the norm for the sake of the profession, for the general public it serves, and, finally, for the area of occupation specialisation in which it is expert. As Freidson states, it is 'the right, even the obligation, of professionals to be independent of those who empower them legally and provide them with their living'.

The values that reflect paper conservation's core were found in comments made by the interviewees, and a theme can be identified therefrom. Comments made relating to the establishment of the IPC included '[We were] bloody bold and resolute,' and 'Why should we stop and go under the auspices of [an organisation] that was younger and not as well organised as us?' A further, telling comment from this case study argued, 'Why should we go under an organisation [...] not as well organised, or have them dictate to us?' Another stated from the beginning, 'We were not just argumentative. We were lively and very intelligent [...] yes, single-minded – single-minded for conservation.'

These views, from the interviewees about the establishment of the IPC, highlight the strongly held and righteous belief that existed amongst the first-movers in paper conservation, reflecting the militant nature of paper conservators as the practice organised and evolved. This was further qualified by another respondent, who stated that paper conservation wanted ‘to become significantly relevant within the culture of the nation [...] to have a voice’, and it intended to do this by being a ‘moral force’. Its members believed that if paper conservators were well organised and committed to their beliefs, then their message would be considered and accepted.

A further comment made by an interviewee about the convergence process illustrates a maturity in the sentiments expressed by previous commentators about the attitude that prevailed when the IPC was established. S/he felt that it was important that paper conservation be seen to be ‘doing the right thing, at the right time, and in the right place’, describing it as ‘a fitness for, and of, purpose’.

In striving to become ‘significant’, paper conservators organised and established themselves in a manner that enabled them to secure acceptance and recognition for their practice. In trying to define the transcendent value of conservation, there is a further aspect that needs to be considered, and that is the extent to which paper conservators identify with practice.

Dutton and Dukerich (1991) noted through their research that a person’s sense of self and his/her organisation’s identity and motivation are very closely aligned. They undertook research into the attitude of employees of the Port Authority of New York during a prolonged period in which homeless people were using its facilities. Dutton and Dukerich found that criticism levelled at the employees of the Port Authority by the general public about their handling of the crisis was taken very personally by the former, and they reacted. Dutton and Dukerich noted how the Port Authority’s image and identity guided the activities of individuals associated with it, and how an organisation’s image and identity guide an individual’s interpretations of issues and his/her motivation to change them. A similar pattern of criticism and reaction was apparent from the research into how

paper conservation has changed. By analysing the passionate responses secured across the five case studies, the extent to which paper conservators identify with practice was established, and the implications of this on the transcendent value of paper conservation were considered.

Passionate responses secured from the interviews were numerous and varied. A level of aggression was mentioned towards those who, particularly in the early stages of paper conservation, did not conform to the core values of the emerging practice. One respondent recalled how these individuals were aggressively challenged at workshops and conferences when they mentioned practices that did not conform to the ideals of paper conservation, namely reversibility and minimum intervention, and this is something that the author has also witnessed. These all go to illustrate the depth of identity that paper conservators have with their occupation, and this level of identity was a key issue in how the profession developed.

The loss of close friends because of one respondent's involvement in the accreditation process was one such comment. The respondent interviewed was tasked with assessing the applications for accreditation. Although responsibility for the decision to accept or reject the conservator's application was determined by a committee, and not one individual, the interviewee was blamed by some of the conservators whose applications were rejected. What the incident illustrates was the cost, in personal terms, paid by the interviewee because of his/her involvement in the accreditation process, but it also highlights the degree of passion present amongst those whose accreditation was rejected.

Similarly, the emotional response from another interviewee recalled how a suggestion made to improve the structure of the newly established ICON, namely to establish practice-representative subgroups within the organisation, was first accepted and then not acted upon. When first made, the respondent's suggestion was commended for its logic and the potential improvement it could make to the new organisation. The suggestion was subsequently rejected by ICON. When interviewed some ten years after the suggestion had been rejected, the interviewee became visibly upset. The rejection of his/her

suggestion was something that remained. What further compounded the slight was the fact that in the time since the suggestion was rejected, representative subgroups – the original suggestion made by the interviewee – had been established within ICON.

This emotional response is also observable in the debate around the establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation and the provision of quality paper-conservation education. This reaction reflects a deep identity with the practice, and any challenge or impact on this relationship is regarded as an affront to one's self, eliciting a very emotional response.

Constantly reacting to a perceived problem displays organisational values that those outside the organisation reward with recognition, acceptance, and, ultimately, legitimacy. Conservators were looking to have the message that paper conservation espoused, namely the proper care of paper-based cultural material, accepted.

The arguments proffered by individuals in favour of and against convergence of the five groups were examined as part of the case studies. Each side of the debate was passionate about its stance, and what was common to both sides was the degree to which both groups believed that they were right. Both believed that their approach was the only logical outcome, and that conservation would suffer if their approach did not proceed. What was common to both sides of the debate was the extent to which, their differences aside, they were passionate about conservation.

Indeed, the process of convergence took paper conservators to a point where they had to decide about the nature of their representative body. The IPC was a practice-based representative body, and this was one of its key strengths. Prior to convergence, conservation was considered fractured. It was argued by those in favour of convergence that the next logical step was for various conservation-based representative bodies to merge as one, to form a stronger, more cohesive body. For paper conservators, this meant

having to choose between continued representations by a practice-focused body or a single, all-inclusive representative body.

Earlier on, a pattern of values was established throughout the interviews, reflecting a single-minded, somewhat militant attitude within paper conservation as it emerged as a practice. This was qualified by interviewees as paper conservators' search for justification and efficiency. Further consideration of the emotional aspects encountered throughout the interviews provides two organisational identities from which we can begin to gain an understanding of paper conservation's transcendent value.

In describing this phenomenon, Freidson noted that it was not sufficient to simply have a body of knowledge and to base one's professionalism on it. What was important, he maintained, was how the occupation acted with this knowledge to grow and defend itself. The previous quotes and anecdotal responses demonstrate the motivation of individuals at the heart of conservation's change process. They illustrate the extent to which paper conservators were prepared to go beyond the norm – that is, to transcend what was required of them in support of their chosen occupation, paper conservation. This research approach considers the degree to which individuals within an organisation identify with practice, the collective values espoused by the profession, and how they are central to the motivation to change and develop the organisation itself.

Legitimacy was the goal for which paper conservation was striving. It was the return given to paper conservators from the sector, as recognition of the logic and value of the message that they proposed and the way that they addressed image deficits as they arose over time. Legitimacy was the cultural 'significance' that paper conservators sought. By advocating for a paper-conservation approach and by being committed to this process, paper conservators earned legitimacy, acceptance and understanding for the practice from their peers. The role played by the professionalism of paper conservation was central to this process.

In trying to ascertain why legitimacy was such a motivator for paper conservators, Plenderleith's quote from Section 1.6, *A History of Conservation*, is instructive: 'Any self-styled restorer could establish himself in his private studio, experimenting as he liked, repainting where necessary (and often where quite unnecessary), and this was a great source of worry to responsible authorities (Plenderleith, 1999).' He mentions the fear amongst conservators that untrained or inexperienced individuals would place objects at greater risk than those with a degree of knowledge about how to preserve them. Underpinning this was the fear that objects would be damaged by being treated by untrained/inexperienced individuals. Given the extent to which paper conservators identify with practice, such risk was both real and personal. It was one of the key stimulants for change within paper conservation and the reason why it organised itself as well as it did. It was not enough to exclude poor practitioners. It was equally important to have accepted the logic of a paper-conservation approach because it was the ultimate defence against shoddy practitioners. To have it accepted, it was important for the IPC to be as efficient and effective as it could be.

The aforementioned fear, albeit less intense, was apparent as a motivator in the accreditation process. Lester (2002) asserts that this fear was the key reason why conservation organised as a profession and followed a policy of exclusion, which Larson (1977) identified in her research into the professions. Contrary to Larson's assertions that the policy existed to improve the remuneration or status of an individual within a profession, the conservators' version existed because of their dedication to their core principle: the proper conservation of paper-based cultural material.

This motivation, coupled with the intensity to which paper conservators identified with practice, provided an extremely powerful catalyst for change – a catalyst that saw paper conservators strive for development far beyond what would be considered the norm. For a voluntary representative organisation, it was so successful at doing this that, by the end of the period under review, there was no alternative to paper conservation when it came to conserving paper-based cultural material. Paper conservation had become the accepted norm for intervention within the museum and gallery sector and with the general public

alike. This is the finest testament to the efforts of all those within paper conservation who strove to ensure that it developed as a profession.

By combining the two theoretical approaches – the study of professional development and organisational-development theory – the model for change, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, was further enhanced to explain how paper conservation has changed as a profession. The extent to which members of a profession will go above and beyond the norm to further their own professional and practical aims is reflected in the ‘transcendent value’ attached to that profession. This concept captures and describes an attribute of a profession that was effective at realising its aims, which, in turn, served a particular need with the wider public.

If one considers the model of change noted in Chapter Five, which illustrates how change takes place within a profession, the transcendent value impacts on, and is central to, all the stages within this model. The image deficit, the changes in professional structures, recognition from outsiders because of the communication process, and, finally, an enhanced identity are all influenced by the transcendent value of the profession. The greater the value, the more effective the change will be. The transcendent value at the core of this model represents a greater commitment by the individuals within that profession to making relevant changes within it. The model also denotes a synergy of the two theoretical approaches. Each stage is impacted by the commitment that everyone within that profession has for its practice, or, in other words, the extent to which they identify with that practice. Each stage of the model also has a relevance to the development of all the case studies undertaken as part of this research. The model can be applied to any of the case studies, illustrating how and why the change within conservation came about, and, in turn, demonstrating its impact on the professionalism of paper conservation and conservation in general.

The anecdotal responses of the interviewees and the passionate responses observed throughout the numerous case-study interviews conducted inform our understanding of the nature of change within paper conservation. This, coupled with the research undertaken by

Dutton and Dukerich (1991), enables us to evaluate paper conservation's development as a profession and allows it to be benchmarked against current sociological research into the nature of a profession. Finally, it allows us to include within the model for change, as illustrated in Section 5.4, the key motivating factor for the 'justification' of paper conservation, namely its transcendent value.

## 6.2 Model of Professional Change

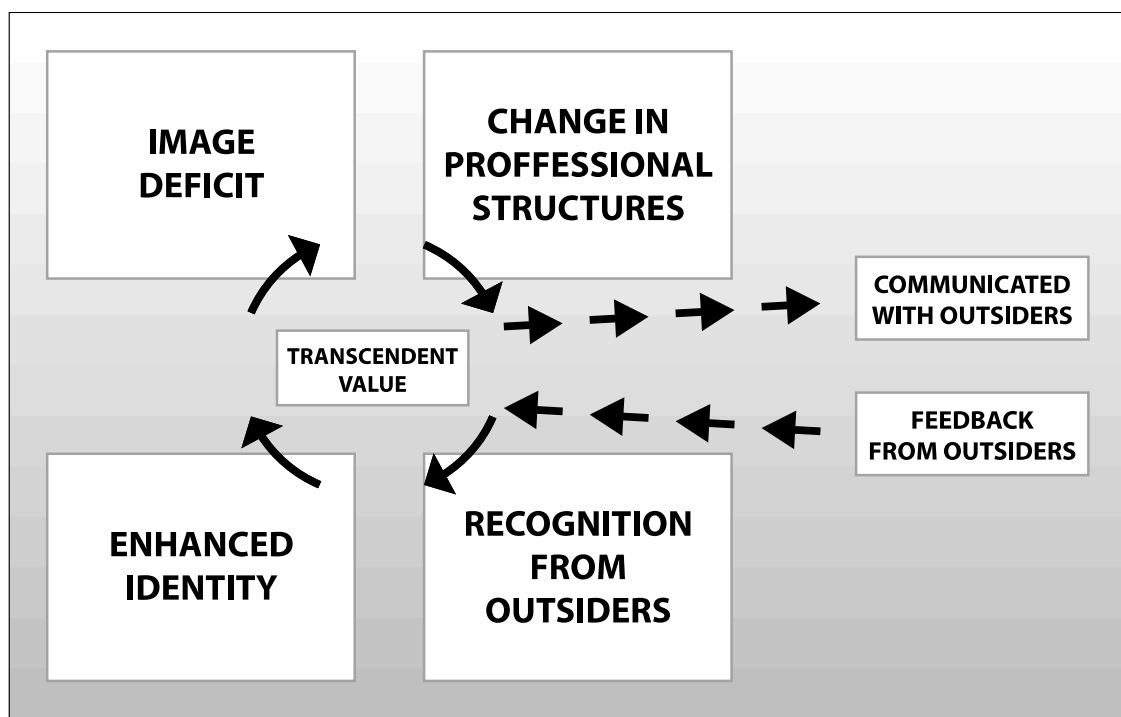


Figure 6.1: Model for Professional Change

The enhancement to the model above places the transcendent value of a profession at the core of change within the model, as it is this factor more than any other that presents at every stage of the process. Paper conservators were striving to be legitimate – a notion that was identical to Freidson's (2001) value. If this is applied to the outlined model detailed earlier in this chapter, at its centre must be the transcendent value of the profession, for it is this that determines the quality of change within that profession. Freidson's analysis of



professional development was significant for the change in the overall understanding of the development of the professions that it brought about. It looked to the motivation of the individuals involved in the profession, stating that the true nature of the profession was its transcendence, and that this provided a reason for the nature of the profession and how it developed. Organisational-change theory, on the other hand, looks to the motivation of individuals within an organisation to determine the nature of that organisation, and to explain the changes that take place in the way the organisation is organised. By combining both approaches, this research has enabled a greater understanding of the motivation of paper conservators as they organised as a profession. What was seen as legitimacy for them was, for Freidson, the soul of a profession.

Finally, when this motivation is considered in the context of the sociological research into the development of a profession, it highlights how closely the development of conservation as a profession is reflected in the four-stage model of professional development. Evetts' (2003) research into the development of a profession gives credit to those professions that strive to improve their practice. The case studies undertaken illustrate paper conservation's continued emphasis on the need to improve practice. This continued focus was recognised by Evetts (2003) as being a key attribute of a profession.

Sciulli (2005) and Evetts (2006) maintained that the nature of a profession can be assessed by the level and nature of trust that exists between the professional practitioner and the users of that service. There exists a very strong, trusting relationship between paper conservators and their service users. This was reflected by the fact that paper conservation was the near universal choice of intervention to treat paper-based cultural material amongst museums, galleries, collectors and the public. This was discernible across all the case studies.

## **6.3 Impact of this model for future change within conservation**

There are three distinct phases of change apparent across all five case studies, and these can be classed into the following three categories: origination, execution and realisation. Analysing these three distinct phases of change can inform and have value for those charged with implementing change measures within conservation in the future.

### **6.3.1 Origination**

The origination of the change events came, for the most part, from individuals who understood the benefits thereof. These individuals could foresee the impact and potential value that the proposed change had for the development of paper conservation, and they also had access to, and could commit, the resources required for realising the change.

Many of these individuals had experience of other occupations, and this previous experience appears to have informed their appreciation of the potential value of the proposed change for paper conservation. They believed in the potential benefits and were very single-minded in ensuring that the change was realised. They needed to be able to communicate the proposed change, to inspire a wider group to accept it, and, finally, to oversee and manage the resources required to ensure that the change was realised.

### **6.3.2 Execution**

The initial implementation of the change idea followed a similar pattern in each case study. The individual who proposed the change communicated it to another core group, which was then tasked with realising the change idea. The individual's ability to communicate and inspire the core group about the potential gains to paper conservation was critical to this stage. It was also the responsibility of the individual who had the idea to resource this core group sufficiently, to ensure that the change was realised.

Resistance was encountered by those who championed the individual change events. For example, the accreditation process met with direct resistance from members in the early stages of its proposal. The convergence process was resisted by many paper conservators, while the establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation had its detractors. This resistance appears to have occurred because members did not appreciate, or were not aware of, the benefits that the change had for the practice of paper conservation. Within the convergence case study, the intensity of the resistance can be attributed to the fact that the change was perceived by some paper conservators as directly threatening the way in which the practice operated. By merging the IPC with ICON, the perception amongst some members was that practice would be adversely affected, and that there would be a loss thereto. This research has highlighted that paper conservators identified very strongly with practice. Criticism of any aspect of conservation practice was a criticism of self. This accounts for the intensity of the resistance associated with the convergence process.

Conversely, the level of acceptance of the change was dependent on the degree to which paper conservators appreciated the extent to which the change event impacted positively on practice. This was a central factor, encountered in all case studies, in ensuring that the change event was successful. This is clearly one factor that should be considered by those tasked with introducing future change events.

### **6.3.3 Realisation**

Implementing and realising the change ambition and embedding it within the operation of conservation also followed a pattern, taking time, and it continued to have repercussions for some time after it was introduced.

The change idea was realised by individuals who committed their time to ensuring that it was accepted. In some cases, this involved a significant time commitment. Some paper conservators involved in the accreditation process took holidays from work to realise the

change. Others recounted how they had lost friends because they were asked to adjudicate as part of the accreditation process, and some paper conservators disagreed with the decisions that they made.

The convergence process involved a significant time commitment on the part of a small group of conservators to ensure that it was realised. All of this took place on a voluntary basis, with no remuneration to anyone involved. Change within conservation was dependent on the goodwill of the individuals involved in achieving it. In many cases, the individuals involved in initiating the ideas and those within the wider initial core group, charged with realising it, went unnoticed. Their sole reward appeared to be the implementation of the change event.

If the change event was not realised effectively, it had implications for the future operation of paper conservation. The divisive debate around convergence led to rancour amongst paper conservators for considerable time beyond the establishment of ICON. This was reflected in the interviews conducted as part of the convergence case study. Much of this criticism was without foundation and had become unreasonable through embellishment over time, but it continued to have a negative impact for some paper conservators, and this deprived ICON of their membership and potential skills as the organisation established and developed.

Momentum was mentioned by interviewees across three separate case studies as being integral to the change with which they were involved. Change was expected to happen within a succinct period, otherwise it risked failing. There was an expectation that the change event would happen relatively quickly, otherwise it would lack the support to see it adopted. The speed with which a change idea is adopted seems to reflect its acceptance (or otherwise) from the membership, so the momentum of change is important.

Finally, legitimacy that is a gain in stature was found to have been a factor common to all the case studies undertaken. The change event needed to have an overarching benefit to

conservation, be it associated with a gain in practice or in the stature of conservation. Change can be disruptive and take time to realise. All of these findings, reflected as they are in the analysis of the case studies, have implications for those charged with introducing change to conservation in the future.

## **6.4 The Role of Government**

From the analysis of the case studies, it is apparent that the government had a very direct role in conservation for part of the period under review, but this waned. Its most direct involvement took place in Period 1, and, as outlined in the previous chapter, it was associated with the acceptance of the findings of the Brandes report (1984). The sponsorship of the Conservation Unit marks a high point in the government's involvement in conservation, which was perceptibly reduced from 1995 onwards.

The IPC's direct contact with the government was minimal. Contact, when it did happen, appears to have been ad hoc in nature. Each of the interviewees was asked about the level of state or governmental involvement in his/her change event, and each answered that there was none. One respondent did recall having an opportunity to meet with a minister for the arts to discuss the needs of paper conservation, but s/he declined to do so because s/he felt that the meeting would culminate in the criticism of conservation at the British Library, an institution for which the conservator had worked on a contract basis. His/her commitment was such that if the two were to meet, the conservator would have no option but to address the situation of the British Library. In the end, the conservator decided to decline the opportunity. What is interesting about the anecdote is that no other options were considered.

Another instance featured a paper conservator who was related to a member of the House of Lords and used her position to lobby her relative in the hope that further support for paper conservation could be secured. This shows that there was at least the possibility of

furthering the needs of paper conservation through informal contacts, but the contact, as outlined, was clearly unplanned, occasional and opportunistic. There was no apparent meaningful connection at an official level between the state and the IPC.

At the time of the convergence debate taking place, there were twelve representative bodies in existence, representing various groups of practising conservators. The difficulty experienced by governmental departments in dealing with such a large number of representative bodies was cited as a reason in favour of convergence. Fewer representative bodies, it was argued, would ensure more efficient contact between both parties. It was also argued that it was in conservation's interest that this should happen. The issue highlighted a degree of potential contact between the representative bodies and state departments, however, no concrete example of this was discovered.

The government played a role in educating paper conservators through the Camberwell College of Arts, part of the University of the Arts London, and through the degree course in paper conservation offered by Northumbria University. The practice of advocacy, which was part of the debate around convergence, was cited as being necessary for the promotion of paper conservation into the future, and the government was one of the main targets of this advocacy.

The role of the government throughout the period under review has changed. In the mid-eighties, it was committed to assisting with the development of conservation – a commitment on which it later reneged. Conservators could also be accused of squandering a very valuable opportunity. As one respondent succinctly stated, by not 'understanding what the Unit was about', a key opportunity for conservation was missed. Frustration with the lack of responsibility taken by the various representative bodies was noted by another respondent. On one level, there was a sense of lost opportunity around the closure of the Conservation Unit, marking a point at which the government stopped directly engaging with the conservation sector.

Paper conservation's engagement with the government, on the other hand, appears to have been very limited. There were incidents mentioned by the various respondents, of contact taking place between paper conservation and governmental representatives, but this contact was minimal, with no clear intent or purpose. This is surprising, given the role played by the government and the vested interests of the two parties, the government and conservation.

One respondent suggested an explanation for this, and that was that paper conservators had no leverage for changing the government's approach. S/he suggested that there was no good reason for the government to make a change to the status quo. To do so would inevitably incur a state cost implication for the same level of service. By maintaining the current financial arrangements, the government had a group of very committed individuals caring for its cultural material, who were content, most of the time, to do so for a lower remuneration than what they considered an adequate return for the risk and skills involved. Conservation's engagement with the government was therefore seen as unplanned, and not realising its full potential.

## **6.5 The Impact of Professionalism on Practice**

The knowledge generation mentioned as part of the professionalism of paper conservation had a bearing on the nature of practice within the sector. From the outset, paper conservation has strived to develop a greater understanding of its practice, highlighting the shortfalls therein. The various workshops, publications, conferences and seminars all form part of this initiative.

Paper conservation has also changed the emphasis on its practice throughout the period under review. As paper conservation emerged, the predominant activity of a conservator was summed up by the term 'benchwork', and s/he was fully engaged with treating damaged paper-based cultural objects. The role of the paper conservator working within a museum setting or on a contract basis has expanded to the point where paper conservation

has an input into all aspects of the care of paper-based cultural material. This not only includes the ongoing conservation of works, but also storage, display criteria, loan conditions, packing for transportation, and preventative conservation, to name a few.

Prior to accreditation taking place, the nature of employment within the conservation sector had been changing. There had been a significant growth in the numbers of conservators working on a commission basis for both public and private collections, and this is reflected in the research undertaken by Winsor (1998). With this growth came a need to provide clients with assurances in relation to the quality of the service being provided, so the accreditation process was devised and implemented. In this instance, the changing profile of the customer and new areas of practice facilitated the need for the change.

Similarly, preventative conservation emerged as a result of conservators and others within the sector realising the need for improvements in storage and display, and the discipline had a significant impact on the condition of entire collections. This came from an appreciation of the value of preventative methods. Eventually, preventative conservation became its own separate practice, but it was driven by an understanding that arose from the overall practice.

Professionalism's impact on practice centres around time management and an expansion of the role of the conservator. Those interviewed, particularly museum-based practitioners, lamented the lack of time available to work on objects. The role of the conservator has expanded considerably over the time frame under review, partially as a result of the expanding role of conservation, and partially as a result of the financial pressures faced by institutions. For many conservators, this expanding role has meant that they have less and less time to spend working on objects.



## 6.6 Transcendent Value

The transcendent value of paper conservation, as highlighted in the analysis, was the conservators' deeply held conviction in the rightness of their approach to treating paper-based cultural objects. This they synthesised into organising themselves, to the best of their abilities, and in a manner that best represented their value. By applying organisational-change theory, this thesis has highlighted how closely paper conservators identified with their practice. Any criticism levelled at paper conservation was, by extension, seen as a criticism of paper conservators themselves, hence their motivation and drive to realise the change and ensure that it became an accepted practice.

In examining conservation's ability to 'judge' its patrons, its employers, and the laws of the state, we are trying to determine the extent to which it can act independently. This is related to the extent to which it will intervene in favour of the object to be conserved against its own individual and collective well-being. The extent to which conservation rightly judges, criticises and advocates for the sake of the object to be conserved provides it with legitimacy. The transcendent value empowers those in the profession with the right to defy, criticise or challenge the laws of the state. It is the extent to which it will stand up to authority at a time when it considers the well-being of cultural objects to be at risk. This was evident within paper conservation, especially in the first few years of the IPC's operation. As aforementioned, an independent chairperson was appointed to the committee of the IPC to minimise bickering between committee members, and this process continued for the first twenty years. This also provides a logical explanation for the level of aggression witnessed around the case studies, with much of the animated debate occurring between the three groups: curators, other conservators, and fellow paper conservators.

These vignettes provide us with an insight into the nature of the professionalism of paper conservation, as outlined in the previous chapter. Conservators convey a deeply held belief in the righteousness of paper conservation as being the process by which paper-based

materials should be preserved for the future. Furthermore, they believe that the effective conservation of artistic creations is essential so that they can be enjoyed and appreciated by this and future generations. The two keywords herein are ‘belief’ and ‘effective’. As noted in the previous chapter, this was a fervently held belief that was supported by the commitment and sacrifice of conservators, which extended far beyond what would be considered normal practice.

There is also recognition amongst paper conservators that to be a good conservator is simply not enough – one needs to be a good professional as well. This is what gives the profession of paper conservation, as it exists, its meaning and purpose. Conservators have a deeply held belief that drives much of the change that has occurred within paper conservation over the thirty years of its collective representation. This belief, coupled with a high degree of emotional attachment, accounts for the levels of extraordinary personal commitment witnessed throughout this research.

No evidence exists of any research into conservation’s professionalisation, or about the steps needed to achieve it. Criticism of the professions by researchers peaked around the turn of the century, with predictions of their demise. There was much comment on their future, and some sociologists thought that they would not last as working disciplines. By contrast, most of the change events being examined as part of this research coincided with these predictions.

While the demise of the professions was being predicted, paper conservation was organising its accreditation process and entering into discussions with its fellow conservation organisations about merging to become one representative organisation. If conservators at that time had consulted the contemporary research on the future of the professions, they would have found that, according to commentators, they were predicting their demise. With the absence of any clear programme for development, it would appear that paper conservation was ‘self-reflective on [its] own professional identity’ (Nolin, 2007).

## **6.7 Conservation and Professionalism**

This research has shown that the transcendent value of conservation is its dedication to the effective conservation of culturally based objects, and this value is critical to its overall professionalism. It empowers conservators to defend their values and act in defiance of any attempts to challenge them. Furthermore, it provides a logic for changes that have occurred in the past, but also for those that may occur in the future.

As a collective, conservators identify strongly with practice, and if this is challenged in any way, they will react in response. Evidence exists to support this throughout the five case studies. The period under review was significant for the levels of conflict associated with the studies. Freidson (2001) remarked that it was a right and obligation to defy those who compromised a profession's values. Conservators reacted, and the nature of the debate that surrounded convergence was a testament to this. Highlighting the nature of the collective identity of conservators with practice better informs those charged with introducing change programmes within conservation.

In contrast, the identification with practice has resulted in an energy for change. It explains why so many conservators volunteered so much of their own time to oversee the changes that were achieved, as detailed in the five case studies. The changes were significant, and they demanded time and resources that were regarded as being above the norm. This strength of identity, again, has implications for the success of initiatives relating to change within conservation. If the change can be associated with an improvement in practice, then it has a greater chance of success. This was apparent in the accreditation case study, in which initial vocal resistance gave way to acceptance of the concept. Much of this success was due to the link with practice made by those who organised the initiative.

A greater understanding of the nature of conservation's professionalism is also valuable, as it provides the sector with opportunities. As we have seen in the literature review, the

concept of a profession is not static. It is always changing. At the start of the period under review, the trait model was the accepted norm. In the intervening period, much was written about the professions that criticised the concept. More recently, there has been a revision of the nature of the professions, questioning their reasons for being. One such revision was that of Svensson (2006), who created a semantic questionnaire that was administered to gauge attitudes towards the concept of professionalism. The results showed a very strong emphasis on practical knowledge, competencies and skills, with one group placing emphasis on being effective, while the other placed emphasis on the ethical and moral elements of a professional relationship. What received the least mention was authority licensing and legitimisation. A strong emphasis on practical knowledge and skills is reflected in the overall professional structure of conservation, making the prospect of attaining full professional recognition achievable.

Evetts (2003) argues that professionalism has become an appealing ideology for occupational groups. It is a mechanism by which they can define a problem and control the solution, rather than focusing on quality of service. Certainly, the five case studies reflect this process. Each one built on the achievements of preceding cases, providing conservation with an enhanced professionalism and a clear gain for its organisation. Considering the emphasis that conservation puts on professionalism at an individual level, this should also be reflected at an organisational level, with consideration of a move to a full professional structure. The motivation for doing so should be, as it had been in all the professional measures adopted thus, the improvement of the conservation of cultural objects.

It is clear from the five case studies that, based on the rate of change events, incremental change is happening and the time periods for realising them have been reducing. With the advent of ICON, there followed a period of relative calm, as the new organisation began to consolidate. Given the pattern of change illustrated by the case studies, it appears that conservation was subject to a period of dynamic change prior to the formation of ICON. This approach to organisational change finds that it is a continuous process of experimentation and adoption, enabling the organisation to best meet the challenges of operating in an uncertain and dynamic environment. Further, it accepts that change

operates via a multilevel, cross-organisational process that unfolds through a number of medium-sized incremental steps over a number of years. Change is regarded as being a political, social process, as opposed to a rational, analytical one. This profile reflects the pattern of change that occurred in conservation over the period under review.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

The aims and objectives of this research project were to investigate how conservation has changed over the stated time frame thereof.

Both the aims and objectives of this research were fully realised. The aims of the research were to explore the nature of the conservation sector over a thirty-year period from its emergence, from 1975 to 2005; to analyse how one sector of practice – paper conservation – developed over this time frame; and, thirdly and finally, and to propose a change model that reflected the strategic direction within conservation over this period.

The case studies and their analyses provide a detailed exploration of the nature of paper conservation and how it changed and developed over time. From this detail, it was possible to identify the issues that drove the changes therein, and these can be found in the analysis chapter. The proposed change model, although somewhat simplistic, is an accurate reflection of how conservation changed over the time frame under review.

The objectives were: to identify and analyse the changes that have taken place within the organisation of conservation over a thirty-year time frame, to ascertain the motivation for these changes, and to analyse paper conservation as an example of conservation practice. All three objectives were realised.

The social-constructivist nature of the research secured an in-depth analysis of paper conservation from the interviews, and these proved to be a very effective means of

realising the objectives of the research. Important insights were realised on at least two occasions. The admission by one respondent, that the IPC had considered the option of establishing itself as a full profession, was one, while the emotional response of one conservator who had his/her suggestions for a structural change to ICON initially accepted and then rejected illustrated the depth of identity between paper conservators and practice.

Lester's (2002) assertion that conservation was not a profession in the traditional sense of the word is borne out by the evidence in the analysis. Conservation was not a licensed practice, as found in medicine and law, and Lester doubted that it would ever become one. However, in the absence of an opportunity to develop as a fully fledged profession, conservation's members chose to 'increase professional awareness' amongst themselves. They used the process of professionalism to realise key objectives that changed and evolved over time, and to provide a degree of cohesiveness to this newly emerging practice. The process supported the exchange of information and knowledge, which fostered a greater understanding of the principles of paper conservation. Conservators were so successful at developing as a profession that towards the end of the period under review, their approach reflected contemporary research into what it meant to be a profession.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

As an exploration into how the practice of conservation in the United Kingdom changed over the thirty-year period from 1975 to 2005, it was decided to address three areas: firstly, to explore and define the conservation sector as a whole; secondly, to determine the issues that caused change within conservation, with particular emphasis on one segment, namely paper conservation; and, thirdly, to propose a change model to reflect the strategic direction of change within conservation over this time frame.

Three objectives were also realised: to identify and analyse the changes that have taken place within the structures of conservation over the thirty-year time frame; to ascertain the motivation behind these changes; and to assess the implications of the changes that have taken place. The field of paper conservation was chosen to represent the whole sector, and both aims and objectives have been achieved.

In Chapter One, a review of the history of both conservation and paper conservation noted how the sector grew and developed as a practice over the time frame of the research project. It provided an insight into the nature of the conservation industry as a whole. Various different surveys noted the number of individuals working in conservation and illustrated the different roles available. The comparison between surveys conducted at the start and end of the time frame under review give an idea of the growth that took place over the thirty-year period.

The review also highlighted the role played by the professionalisation process in the growth of paper conservation and this became a central tenet of the research. Paper conservation laid great emphasis on professionalism as it emerged as an organised practice, and it maintained that emphasis throughout its existence. This focus on

professionalism provided a set of values with which paper conservators could identify, which, in turn, led to a degree of cohesiveness and control within the practice as it organised as a group. It also had the further gain of ensuring a strong identity between practice and professionalism. In short, it was necessary to not only be a good paper conservator, but also one had to be a good professional as well.

The professionalisation process was also a way by which outsiders could judge the commitment of practitioners of paper conservation to their occupation. If they were recognised as being part of a successful, organised profession then their commitment to their practice could be recognised. This commitment meant greater acceptance of the message of paper conservation. Professionalism was an internal measure of control but also a means by which it could, as an organisation, promote the message of paper conservation and engage with its stakeholders.

The core objective of this research was to evaluate the nature of, and motivation behind, the changes that took place in conservation. The five case studies undertaken were in depth and detailed, identifying the nature of the changes that had occurred. They spanned the thirty-year time frame under review, from the inauguration of the Institute of Paper Conservation in 1976, to the establishment of the master's degree in preventative conservation in 2005. Research into these five change events was considered worthwhile in that it would be both relevant and have a value to paper conservation and conservation alike. What is particularly striking about all five case studies was the extent to which each relied on the vision of individuals to champion the change idea, and the level of commitment they and other paper conservators possessed in order to realise it. From this it was possible to identify the issues that facilitated change and these have been detailed in both the cross-case analysis, Chapter Five, and the discussion chapter, Chapter Six.

The two periods identified within the time frame, Period 1 and Period 2, highlight a difference in the nature of change that occurred within the development of paper conservation. Within these periods, there were two differing attitudes discernible. In Period 1 there was support offered to paper conservators who were self-employed and



who worked on a contract basis for museums, galleries and the general public alike. This support was proposed in the Brandes report (1984), which led to the establishment of the Museums and Galleries Commission, and was further pushed by the Conservation Unit. The focus of change during this initial period was to support all areas of conservation practice and there was no distinction made as to the nature of an individual paper conservator's employment.

There was a noticeable and distinct change in attitude during Period 2, when greater emphasis was placed on collections management. The accreditation process focused on the needs of the users of the services offered by paper conservators, providing assurance and confidence to use an accredited conservator. The realisation that so many museums only had a limited, or no access, to conservators prompted the Conservation Unit to place greater emphasis on supporting this sector, and publications were designed, produced and distributed to assist them with their collections. Finally, the pace of change within this period was noticeable faster than the earlier period, with a larger concentration of case studies and with each change occurring at a faster rate.

The establishment of the MA in Preventative Conservation in 2005 brings to an end Period 2, and marks the advent of a new phase of development within both paper conservation and conservation in general – a phase that lies outside the scope of this research.

The literature review in Chapter Two, relating to the development of both paper conservation and conservation in general, highlighted the major changes that took place within both over the period under review. The five successful change events that were identified readily from the literature review were representative of these changes. Each change event was extensively researched prior to being incorporated into the research. They also lent themselves well to being investigated using the case study method.

Successive committees of the IPC used the professionalisation process as a means of setting standards for the practice of conservation. It provided a set of values with which

conservators could identify, and with which they were happy to comply, however, this ambition was limited, as the IPC realised at an early stage of its development that it would never achieve full professional status. It quite consciously used the professionalisation process as a means of controlling its members and, as such, paper conservation is an example of a self-regulating, self-determining profession.

One of the key motivating factors for the concentration on professionalisation was as the need for the acceptance of the message of paper conservators. They believed in the core values of a paper conservation approach and were anxious that others identified with these values and accepted them as the best approach to treating paper-based cultural objects. Conservation was, and still is, an emerging discipline, practised and presided over by individuals committed to what they do and who believe in the rightness of the way in which they intervene to protect, preserve and conserve cultural material for this and future generations.

Standards were set and changed according to the perceived need of the time. The notion of what it meant to be a good professional conservator changed as time went by. Being accepted as a legitimate practice was important, as it meant that the message of paper conservation that is the principles of minimum intervention, reversibility and the documentation of damage and intervention was garnering more recognition and becoming more widely accepted. This message is at the core of all the interviews carried out with the research participants. All interviewees identified completely with the values of conservation. Throughout many hours of questioning, where there may have been dissent about how conservation developed, converged or was accredited, there was no criticism of the principles of conservation. By contrast, the depth of acceptance by all of these principles was observed to be intense.

The ultimate logic and motivation behind all the case studies was identified as legitimacy. Legitimacy and acceptance for the message that paper conservation and conservation in general wished to convey was at the centre of the changes within conservation. It was simply not enough that paper conservators believed that a conservation approach was the

right one; all others involved in the sector had to also accept this. Securing this acceptance ensured that the principles of conservation would be accepted above those of the trade. This was not done out of malice or to monopolise the sector. There were plenty of paper conservators working privately to maintain healthy levels of competition within the sector. It was motivated by a desire to ensure that paper-based cultural material was cared for in the best-possible way.

The success of this approach was illustrated by the fact that by the end of the period under review the principles of paper conservation had become accepted as the best method for treating paper-based cultural material, in order to ensure its stability, fineness and preservation for the future.

What was important for all involved with the changes, was seeing that the principles of paper conservation were promoted, accepted and implemented, and this agenda pervades all the change events herein examined.

Legitimacy also reflected a growing, deepening relationship between the suppliers and users of the service of paper conservation. When the IPC was first formed, there was considerable resistance to paper conservation from some curators, educators and fellow paper conservators, as has been previously outlined in detail. Paper conservation was a new concept striving for legitimacy and acceptance. In time, it did achieve this, but the level of acceptance garnered was due in no small part to the changes enacted by paper conservators over the lifetime of the IPC.

The commitment of the various actors involved in the change events was total and unwavering. If there was dissent about a change event, as there was over the convergence process, the argument revolved around the rightness of the change for paper conservation. Although arguments of this nature were passionate, they rarely strayed beyond this parameter.

As we saw in Chapter One, Winsor (1998) noted that paper conservators, whether they are working with bound volumes, on archive collections, or with works of art on paper, comprise almost 30% of the total number of practicing conservators. They were the largest single group of practitioners within the newly formed representative group, the Institute of Conservation. For these reasons alone they constitute a viable subsection of conservation and changes to the field as a practice can be extrapolated to having a bearing on the development of conservation as a whole.

The social constructivist nature of the research enabled an in-depth analysis of paper conservation to be secured from the interviews conducted by a researcher who had a good degree of knowledge about paper conservation and its operation over time. The research participants all had a central involvement in each of the change events, some with more than one. Valuable data information, knowledge and insight into each of the change events was secured as a result, and this has equal value for both paper conservation and conservation in general

## **7.2 Contribution to Knowledge**

The review covering the theories of professionalism in Chapter Two was notable for two reasons: firstly, it illustrated the changing nature of professionalism; and, secondly, it illustrated how our understanding of it has changed and developed. What was equally revealing was the way in which paper conservation had grown and developed as a profession over the time frame of the review.

The development of a model that reflects the way in which paper conservation has changed as a profession was one of the central discoveries of this research project. This model is a synthesis of two research interests, the first into professionalism, and the second into organisational change. An analysis of the theory of professionalism was explored and it was found to lack the tools that would enable changes within the profession of paper conservation to be examined. Indeed, there was a lack of any

mechanism that would allow for changes in any profession to be determined and analysed. The change model noted in Chapter Five takes a clearly established organisation change mechanism and combines it with contemporary thinking on the development of a profession in order to produce something that can assess change that has already taken place, and that will take place in the future.

Another contribution to knowledge made by this research was to illustrate the intensity of the identification with practice evident amongst paper conservators, and its implications for the development of paper conservation as a practice and profession. Organisational change theory holds that the intensity of identification by individuals within an occupation with the practice of that occupation is a key motivator to change. The emotional responses identified in the case studies to aspects of change that occurred in conservation illustrated a very intense identity with the practice on the part of paper conservators. Criticism of aspects of the practice of paper conservation was considered as a personal slight by paper conservators and it led to emotional responses. These, in turn, drove the changes that were illustrated by the five case studies. The intensity with which paper conservators identified with practice was central to the manner and frequency of change that happened across the time frame under review.

At the end of the period under research, similarities between the development of paper conservation as a profession and the evolving theory of professionalism became apparent. There were considerable similarities between what sociological theorists considered a profession to be, with the professional development of paper conservation. The analysis of Freidson, Evetts, Sciulli and Evans re-evaluating as it did the relationship between practice and the nature of a profession and paper conservation, resembled much of the new thinking. There is opportunity in this parallel, an opportunity that should be explored by those in a position to do so within paper conservation and conservation in general.

Finally the case studies themselves provide a very detailed insight into key developments within the organisation of both paper conservation and conservation in general.

### **7.3 Limitations**

The resources available to this project were limited. It was conducted on a part-time basis, fully funded by the researcher, and this limited the scope of the investigation. Interviewing the individuals for the case studies was time-consuming and beset with logistical difficulties. Many of the individuals were involved with more than one change event, so it was possible to gain insight into more than one change event from each interviewee. This maximised the return from the interview process and ensured that resources were used as effectively as possible, but there is little doubt that a larger sample of interviewees would have provided greater insight.

The scope of the study was decided upon in the early stages of the research project and limited to the practice of paper conservation in the United Kingdom within the time frame of 1975–2005. This time frame is significant in that it runs from the establishment of the IPC in 1976, and included the debate that surrounded the convergence process, which eventually succeeded in forming a new merger body, the Institute of Conservation. It was important that the project was realisable within the given time frame and with the resources available, and this influenced the scope that was eventually agreed.

Another limitation of the research project was that the information gathered was reliant on the accurate memory of respondents to events, some of which had happened quite some time ago. Some interviewees were hesitant when answering and clearly gave the impression that they had difficulty remembering aspects of the development of paper conservation with which they had been centrally involved.

The change events themselves were chosen as being significant happenings within the development of paper conservation. They were obvious choices, as each was seen to be a major event successfully realised. This, however, left all the change events that were unsuccessful to be researched in the future. The author of this thesis deliberately targeted

successful change events upon which to base the case studies, but while this provided an in-depth understanding of the nature of change within paper conservation, it did not consider factors that might inhibit change taking place.

## **7.4 Directions for Future Research**

Two other areas had a significant impact on the development of paper conservation: the theoretical basis on which conservation interventions are based, and the significant growth in bureaucracy within conservation over the period under review.

Each of these areas warrants investigation, as each has had a significant impact on the practice of paper conservation and conservation in general. There has been considerable change in the understanding of the principles on which conservation decisions and interventions are made. Much of this impact comes from individuals outside the practice of paper conservation. Principles such as reversibility and minimum intervention prevailed during the early part of the time frame under review. These principles have their origins in other disciplines, such as art theory or architecture. Although accepted initially, they became challenged over time. This arose from a greater understanding of the impact of conservation interventions and of their limitations by those trying to work within their confines.

When Peter Winsor (1998) undertook a review of conservation he highlighted the many different roles within the profession, from conservator to teacher, and from collections manager to preventative conservator. Significantly absent from this list of conservation roles was conservation bureaucrat. It was significant because at the time Winsor was just that, a bureaucrat.

The first conservation bureaucrats could arguably have been the team who established the Conservation Unit, but with the advent of ICON this became a more significant role within conservation. Where change in the past had been at the behest of individuals with a

vision for conservation, and the energy and determination to ensure it happened, this evolved further with the advent of ICON. The management of the future of conservation is now largely vested in the chief executive of ICON and the various different staff members associated with the organisation. Where the identification with practice by paper conservators can be seen to have had a significant role to play in the development of conservation up to convergence and the establishment of ICON, it is questionable as to its role going forward under this new arrangement. Given the impact this has had to date, it is worth further investigating the role that a strong identity with practice will have during the era of ICON.

## **7.5 Future Responsibilities**

The changes that resulted after the establishment of ICON fundamentally changed the way in which paper conservation was structured and how it will develop in the future. For the first time, there was one large representative body within conservation whose remit was to develop and promote conservation as a whole. There was also a paid executive whose responsibility it was to further develop paper conservation.

Paper conservation has moved from being a conservation practice with its own representative body, to being part of a larger representative group that includes many different conservation disciplines. The difficulty faced by ICON today is to accommodate the demands of the group while still maintaining a cohesive cohort. The challenge for ICON is to harness the goodwill and altruism that was clearly part of the paper conservation sector, while at the same time keeping it within the overall representative body.

The tone of the interviews conducted with those involved with the convergence process remained hostile. The interviews were carried out a number of years after the establishment of ICON, and with individuals who were both supportive of the development and against it. Surprisingly, some of the strongest criticism of ICON came



from those directly involved with its establishment and who had been initially in favour of it.

There was a clear sense of disappointment with the way in which ICON had developed, and a frustration that much of the vision for the new organisation had not been realised. One aspect of note was the fact that the National Council for Conservation-Restoration was disbanded with the establishment of ICON, removing an important forum dealing with the development of conservation as a whole.

Finally, successive reports have recommended that a central facility to train and educate future conservation professionals be established. Indeed, the Conservation Unit explored the possibility of setting one up. It seems that the logic for establishing such a body is still very relevant.

## **7.6 Business Responsibilities**

With the establishment of ICON, there occurred a fundamental shift in the way in which paper conservators interacted. No longer are they a closed collective group based around practice, but part of a wider collective that includes a large range of conservation skills. The momentum for change in the past originated with individuals who appreciated its value for the practice of paper conservation. Many of them went to considerable lengths to ensure that this change was realised. The administration that emerged needs to be conscious of how change occurred in the past, ensuring that suggestions for development continue to be proposed, realised and achieved.

The possibility of achieving full professional status should at least be debated to evaluate its appeal amongst conservators and its implications for the future development of conservation. It was revealed by one interviewee that the idea of establishing the IPC as an organisation with full professional status was considered by the founding members of the

IPC. Accreditation and the convergence of the representative bodies are two further key steps that moved the practice of paper conservation towards a full professional practice.

Conservators' lack of ambition in relation to becoming a full profession is in contrast to their ambition for the practice of paper conservation. Paper conservators were seen to be single-minded, dedicated, focused individuals who were prepared to commit above and beyond what would have been considered the norm in such situations. Many suffered admonishment from those connected to, and outside, the practice of paper conservation, but their belief in the rightness of many of the change events sustained them while the change was being implemented and accepted. Given this experience it is difficult to understand why there is a reluctance to become a full profession but it certainly is present. There is merit in at least debating the issue. Given the scarce resources available to conservation it is essential that these resources are maximised. If there is merit in conservation developing a full professional status then this should be considered.

## **7.7 Conclusions**

In conclusion, it is worth considering the findings of three different articles that in their own way illustrate and encapsulate the transcendent value of conservation. The first is an article written by Elizabeth Pye and Dean Sully, entitled 'Evolving Challenges and Developing Skills' (2007), which examines changes that have occurred within the heritage context in which conservators work, the skills needed by conservators working in this evolving sector, and finally the role of education in providing conservators with the skills needed to address these changes. In examining the challenges to be faced by conservators in the future, Pye and Sully outline a dynamic range of issues faced by conservators in the past, which will continue to evolve into the changing context of the future.

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## Glossary of Terms and Institutions

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND INSTITUTIONS

**ACCREDITED CONSERVATOR-RESTORER (ACR)** A conservator-restorer (see below) who has been accredited through the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers system.

**ARCHIVAL CONSERVATOR** These were ten regionally based organisations set up to support Museums within their area. They were responsible for the dispersal of government funding to local government universities or independent museums.

**Area Museum Councils** A person responsible for the care and treatment of large collections of paper-based documents and manuscripts, rather than for individual works.

**AUDIT COMMISSION** The Commission's primary objective was to appoint auditors to a range of local public bodies in England, set the standards for auditors and oversee their work. The Commission closed on 31 March 2015, with its functions being transferred to the voluntary, not-for-profit or private sector.

**BENCH CONSERVATOR** A person mainly involved in working directly on objects, conserving them, and placing them on display or in storage.

**BRITISH ANTIQUE FURNITURE RESTORERS' ASSOCIATION (BAFRA)** A national organisation of craftsmen engaged in furniture conservation and restoration.

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF PAINTINGS CONSERVATOR-RESTORERS (BAPCR)** The association works hard to promote and foster the practice of paintings conservation in the UK and around the world. It is the professional organisation for conservator-restorers of paintings, and has international membership.

**BRITISH HOROLOGICAL INSTITUTE (BHI)** The institute is first and foremost a national membership organisation and exists to represent the views and interests of all of Britain's horologists, those who make, repair, service, conserve and restore instruments that measure time.

**CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION** An international charitable foundation with cultural, educational, social and scientific interests, based in Lisbon with offices in London and Paris. The purpose of the UK Branch in London is to bring about long-term improvements in wellbeing, particularly for the most vulnerable, by creating

connections across boundaries (national borders, communities, disciplines and sectors) which deliver social, cultural and environmental value.

**COLOURMAN** A person who deals in paint. London colourmen of the sixteenth century were makers of powdered pigment, mainly for the use of house painters. By the eighteenth century, they were making pigments for artists.

**CONSERVATION** The profession dedicated to the preservation of antiquities for the future, which primarily involves identifying the causes of deterioration and preventing further decay.

**CONSERVATION FORUM** This was an umbrella body established in 1993 when twelve UK and Irish conservation professional bodies came together to explore areas of commonality and to promote greater cooperation. It undertook responsibility for the management of the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers scheme. In 1998 the Forum changed its name to the National Council for Conservation-Restoration (see below).

**CONSERVATION UNIT** The Conservation Unit was a state-sponsored intervention, the intention of which was to support the development of conservation within the UK. It was established in 1987 and was part of the newly formed Museums and Galleries Commission. The Unit was in operation for over thirteen years until the Commission was replaced by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, a new body set up in the year 2000 to represent the sector.

**CONSERVATOR** A person responsible for the care and preservation of cultural material in order to prevent its further deterioration.

**CONSERVATOR-RESTORER** As there is no separate word for conservation in many European languages, the term ‘conservator-restorer’ is used. Sometimes a conservator has to improve the appearance of a damaged object and intervene to restore it. Equally, a restorer might have to work on an object to preserve it. So, in practice, the lines of each discipline can blur.

**CRAFTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)** This was set up in 1971 to advise the government on the needs of the artist craftsman and to promote a nation-wide interest and improvement in their products. In 1979 the CAC was renamed the Crafts Council.

**CRAFTS COUNCIL** The Crafts Council was initially called the Crafts Advisory Committee, and was set up in 1971. It changed its name in 1979 and its given



objective at that time was to advance and encourage the creation and conservation of works of fine craftsmanship and to foster, promote and increase the interest of the public in the works of fine craftsmen and the accessibility of those works to the public in England and Wales.

**CRAYON** A stick of coloured wax, charcoal, chalk or other material used for writing or drawing.

**DENKMALPFLEGE** The conservation and protection of monuments.

**EPHEMERA** Objects originally intended to be useful or important for only a short period of time, some of which may subsequently become collectors' items.

**EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF CONSERVATOR-RESTORERS' ORGANISATIONS (ECCO)**

The mission statement of this body is to organise, develop and promote, on a practical, scientific and cultural level, the profession of the conservator-restorer; to set standards and regulate practice at a European level and enhance communication between professionals

**GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE, ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY TECHNICAL ABSTRACTS**

**(AATA ONLINE)** A comprehensive database of over 100,000 abstracts of literature related to the preservation and conservation of material cultural heritage, organised by the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, California.

**GOUACHE** An opaque form of watercolour obtained by adding white pigment.

**GRAPHITE** Drawing material made from crystalline carbon, commonly found in pencils.

**INSTITUTE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ANTIQUE WORKS IN IRELAND**

**(ICHAWI)** An Irish conservation representative body comprising of various accredited conservators

**INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION (ICON)** In 2005, a convergence process resulted in the merger of five separate bodies, the Institute of Paper Conservation, the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, the Scottish Society for Conservation and Restoration, the Photographic Materials Conservation Group and the Care of Collections Forum, into a new organisation, the Institute of Conservation. Today, this is the largest conservation representative body today in the UK.

**INSTITUTE OF PAPER CONSERVATION (IPC)** This organisation began its existence as the Paper Group, which was initially affiliated to the IIC-UKG group. Set up in 1976, it published peer-reviewed articles in its journal, *The Paper Conservator*. It

also organised conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures, all dealing with various aspects of paper conservation practice. It ceased to exist in 2005 with the establishment of ICON.

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS (ICOM)** Created in 1946, this organisation of [museums](#) and museum professionals has a global scope, and is committed to the promotion and protection of natural and [cultural heritage](#), present and future, tangible and intangible. With approximately 35,000 members in 137 countries, ICOM is a network of museum professionals acting in a wide range of museum and heritage-related disciplines.

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS (IIC)** An internationally based organisation incorporated as a limited company in 1950 (under the title the International Institute for Conservation of Museum Objects) in the United Kingdom. It was the first international body formed to promote dialogue amongst conservators and aimed at increasing their status by forming a self-elected body. It published abstracts and technical literature and promoted training.

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF MUSEUM OBJECTS** See above ‘International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works’.

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION – UNITED KINGDOM GROUP (IIC-UKG)** A nationally based organisation affiliated to the core representative body, the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (see above). It later became the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

**IRISH PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATORS AND RESTORERS ASSOCIATION (IPCRA)** This is Ireland’s largest association of trained and experienced conservators and restorers working in the conservation profession. Active in both the private and the museum sectors, members have expertise in many disciplines, including oil paintings, paper, textiles, furniture, archaeology, ceramics, buildings and display.

**JOINT ACCREDITATION GROUP (JAG)** This group was set up to devise and agree upon a framework through which all conservators could be accredited. It consisted of representatives from three groups, the IPC, the UKIC, and the SoA, as well as an external consultant. It developed the standard route to accreditation known as the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers, a set of common standards by

which all three groups would be assessed for accreditation. In 1999, responsibility for the accreditation process passed to the National Council for Conservation and Restoration.

**QUANGO** Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation.

**MINTZBERG'S MODEL** The different sections of an organisation work independently of each other in order to gain control of the administrative process and use it to their advantage.

**MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES COMMISSION (MGC)** See below 'Museums, Libraries and Archives Council'.

**MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES COUNCIL (MLA)** This organisation began its life in 1931 as the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries (see below), was renamed in 1981 as the Museums and Galleries Commission, and changed to its current title in 2000. Its remit was to promote improvement and innovation in the area of museums, libraries and archives in the UK. In 2011 it ceased to function and its activities relating to museums, libraries and archives were transferred to the [Arts Council England](#) and the [National Archives](#).

**NGO** Non-governmental organisation.

**NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE (NAO)** An independent Parliamentary body in the UK which is responsible for [auditing central government departments](#), [government agencies](#) and [non-departmental public bodies](#).

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CONSERVATION-RESTORATION (NCCR)** Originally formed as the Conservation Forum in 1993, bringing together twelve different conservation representative groups, it became the NCCR in 1998. In 2005, a convergence process resulted in the merger of five separate bodies, known as the 'Vanguard Bodies' of the NCCR, into the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

**NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND** The gallery houses the national collection of Irish and European art.

**NATURAL SCIENCES CONSERVATION GROUP (NATSCG)** This is a UK-based membership organisation and charity run by volunteers. Its mission is to promote and support natural science collections, the institutions that house them, and the people who work with them, in order to improve collections care, understanding, accessibility and enjoyment for all.

**OBJECTS CONSERVATION** The preservation of three-dimensional works of art, treating a broad range of materials and objects.

**OBJECTS CONSERVATOR** A person working in a museum or private practice, specialising in the preservation of three-dimensional works of art.

**PAPER GROUP** This was the first group dedicated to promoting paper conservation and it was established in 1976. By the end of 1977 it had changed its title to the Institute of Paper Conservation, and was a separate independent group which did much to promote paper conservation until the merger in 2005 with four other bodies to become ICON.

**PARCHMENT** A stiff, flat, thin material made from the prepared skin of an animal, usually a sheep or goat, and used as a durable writing surface in ancient and medieval times.

**PASTEL** Drawing material made from a mix of pigment powder and a binder, such as gum or resin, and shaped into a stick.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS CONSERVATION GROUP (PhMCG)** This was a representative body set up to represent the photographic conservators.

**PILOT STUDY** A small-scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, adverse events, and effect size (statistical variability) in an attempt to improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project.

**PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION** Any measure taken to preserve an object, short of specific interventions with the physical forms of the object.

**PROFESSIONAL** Characterised by, or conforming to, the technical or ethical standards of a profession.

**PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION OF CONSERVATOR-RESTORERS (PACR)** A professional qualification, administered by ICON, which demonstrates that a conservator shows a high degree of competence, sound judgement and an in-depth knowledge of the principles which underpin conservation practice.

**PROFESSIONALISATION** A social process whereby people come to engage in an activity for pay or as a means of livelihood. The definition of what constitutes a profession is often contested.

**PROFESSIONALISM** The conduct, aims or qualities that characterise or mark a profession or a professional person.

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS GROUP** This group was owned by the NCCR and needed to oversee the implementation of the PACR system.

**RESTORATION** The practice dedicated to the cleaning, repair and reconstruction of antiquities, it primarily involves removing residue from the surface of works of art.

**RESTORER** The person responsible for the repair or renovation of cultural material so as to return it to its original condition.

**ROYAL COMMISSION ON NATIONAL MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES** The Commission was appointed in 1927 to inquire into all aspects of the administration and development of the national collections. It issued its last report in 1930 and as a result of the Commission's work the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries was established in 1931.

**SCOTTISH SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION (SSCR)** The Society merged with four other UK conservation organisations in 2005 to form the Institute of Conservation.

**SCHWEIDLERISED PRINT** a print that had been dramatically altered and restored so that it deceived a buyer into purchasing it

**SOCIETY OF ARCHIVISTS (SOA)** The Society, which was in existence from 1947 to 2010, was the principal professional body for [archivists](#), archive [conservators](#) and [records managers](#) in the UK and [Ireland](#).

**SOLANDER BOX** Made in the form of a book, it is a case used for storing manuscripts, maps, prints, documents, old and precious books, etc. It is commonly used in [archives](#), [print rooms](#) and libraries. It is named after the Swedish [botanist Daniel Solander](#) (1733–1782), who is credited with its construction while working at the [British Museum](#), where he catalogued the natural history collection between 1763 and 1782.

**STANDING COMMISSION ON MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES** This organisation was set up in 1931 following the recommendations of the Final Report of the [Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries](#), produced in 1929 and 1930. It was renamed the Museums and Galleries Commission in 1981 and given additional responsibilities. In 2000, the MGC and the Library and Information Commission were combined into Re:source, which was later renamed the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council – see above.

**UNITED KINGDOM INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS**

**(UKIC)** See above 'International Institute for Conservation – United Kingdom Group'.

**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

**WATERCOLOUR** Type of paint where pigment, when mixed with gum Arabic, is dispersed with water producing semi-transparent colours.

## Appendix

- 1. List of Interviewees**
- 2. Contribution made by each interviewee towards each individual case study.**
- 3. Codes**
- 4. A Coded Transcript of One interview: Interview with Respondent 1**
- 5. Interview Questions**
- 6. The Consent Form**
- 7. The Letter of Introduction**



## 1. List of Interviewees Background

Cases	Gender	Conservation Background
Interviewees		
1.	Male	Central figure in the accreditation process Practicing paper conservator working in the private sector who also lectured.
2.	Female	Founding member of IPC and central figure in the accreditation process. Practicing paper conservator working in the private sector who also lectures
3.	Female	Centrally involved in the convergence process Practicing paper conservator working in the private sector who also lectures
4.	Female	Founding member of the IPC Practicing paper conservator working in the private sector who also lectures
5.	Female	Conservation educator who was formally a practicing paper conservator.
6.	Female	Former chairperson of the IPC. Practicing paper conservator working in the private sector who also lectures
7.	Male	Founding member of the IPC Practicing paper conservator working in the private sector who also lectures
8.	Male	Founding member of the Conservation Unit. Former objects conservator
9.	Male	Founding member of the Conservation Unit. Former objects conservator and university lecturer
10.	Female	Centrally Involved with the Conservation Unit Formally a paintings conservator
11.	Male	External business consultant that advised on accreditation

## 2. Contribution made by each interviewee towards each individual case study

Cases	Education	IPC Establishment	Convergence	Accreditation	Conservation Unit
Interviewees					
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					

### 3. Codes

#### Previous Career Experience

PCEY Previous Experience Yes

PCEN Previous Experience No

#### Reason for choosing conservation as career

CME Emotional

CMP Practical

CMNC Not clear

CMNA Not applicable

#### Initial specialisation and role

ISPC Paper Contractor

ISPP Paper Public

ISPE Paper Educator

ISAC Archaeology Contractor

ISAP Archaeology Public

ISAE Archaeology Education

#### External context

ECD Demographics

ECE Endorsement

ECC Climate

#### Internal Context

ICC Characteristics

ICN Norms and Authority

ICIH Innovation History

ICOP Organisational procedures

#### Change Drivers

CDP Personal Agenda

CDOS Organisational Structure

CDE External

CDI Internal

#### Government Involvement

GID Government Involvement Direct

GII Government Involvement Indirect

GIN Government Involvement None

#### Event Facilitation

EFPM Personal Motivation

EFKI Key Implementer

EFC Contractor

EFOM Ordinary member

#### Change Event

CECOV Event Chronology – Official V

CECS Event Chronology – Sub V

CEUEN Users expectations – Positive

CEUEN Users Expectation - Negative

CEUE Users experience

CECE Critical events

CEG Governmental Involvement

#### Change Event Impact

CEIO Organisational

CEIP Practice

CEIPR Professionalism

#### Change Event Outcome

CEOO Organisational

CEOP Practice

CEOPR Professionalism

#### Emerging Causal Links

ECLN Networks

ECLR Rules

ECLRP Reoccurring Pattern

ECLEC Explanatory Cluster

#### Queries

QS Surprises

QP Puzzles

#### 4. A Coded Transcript of One Interview: Interview with A Respondent

TRANSCRIPT	CODES
<p>P Thanks for meeting me. I would like to talk to you today about the establishment of the IPC and also to get your opinion and thoughts about convergence if I may.</p> <p>I have a couple of questions about the establishment of the IPC and some things I have observed but can't seem to understand and which hopefully you can help me with.</p> <p>But to start off with an easy one how did you become involved in conservation?</p> <p>R1. How did I get started in conservation?</p> <p>I was studying for my doctorate in Oxford, took the compulsory course in historical bibliography and I became more and more interested in the history of the book. I had been interested previously in becoming a printer and even got hand presses and I realized that you had to be rich before you started. And you certainly were not going to be rich as a result of it. I had to give that up and bookbinding seemed to be a good alternative. I was very lucky in that I got to train with Roger Powell and I wrote to him out of the blue and it was just at the time when he was thinking about taking on another student. So I met him in Oxford when he was on his way through a couple of weeks later. He thought it would be amusing for a doctorate student from Oxford as an apprentice. He had never had one of those before and I stayed with him for two and a half years in which my interest changed from private press books in fine bindings which now bored me to tears into conservation which was then my career.</p> <p>P And what interested you in conservation as opposed to book binding or...</p> <p>R1 I was always interested in antiquarian matters in one way or another. If I hadn't read English at university it would have been history and possibly archeology. It struck me from quite an early date once I had set up on my own was that there was a history of bookbinding which hadn't been written. Which is the history of books which don't have a lot of decoration on them which is 95% of the total. And those are the books which carry literature to the people that read them. The fine bindings by and large were never read. They were put away on a shelf whereas the cheap ephemera stuff is what counts and is much more alive if you like. I was interested then to conserve the material without losing its character. Conservation started as a means of preserving text without reference</p>	<p>PLEY</p> <p>PLEY</p> <p>Change over time</p>

<p>to what was around it. These days particularly in the last decade or so the history of the book has become more important than the text because the text is available in so many other different ways. The primacy of the object is becoming apparent the provenance it's use these are all critical matters and these are matters which the repair of books have largely historically speaking at least ignored and still in so many cases still do.</p> <p>So I became more and more interested in what you can do in order to preserve as much as you can of the archeological value of a book as an archeological site and so the whole concept of minimum intervention, repairs of leaving books unrepaired which don't need to be repaired.</p> <p>P And were you conscious of that back in the sixties</p> <p>N No it was something that grew</p> <p>In the sixties it wasn't until the seventies that I got involved properly. I set up my workshop in 1978 but by then people like Roger Powel mostly Roger Powell rather than Sandy Cockerel were already applying this sort of attitude this forensic analysis of structure to looking at how many times the great manuscripts had been rebound. What you could learn from the thread marks, damage to the spine folds etc. was being applied to the major manuscripts. What happened in the seventies and the eighties was taking that attitude further down the chain of values so that you could actually apply this to ephemeral literature just as with equal validity. I was also involved with the National Trust as an adviser on conservation and part of that job was to do surveys of all their libraries and so I was handling twenty, thirty, forty thousand books a year</p> <p>Seeing enormous numbers of books and seeing enormous varieties of structures and seeing that there was a whole history that you could date and place books accordingly as to how they were bound not how they were decorated that made me realize that every single detail of a book is potentially evidence there's really nothing that is not evidence. But that restricts your scope as a conservator as to what it is safe and sensible to do and also raise a really fundamental question as to how you record structure in a way that is archeologically valuable and reliable and that's the work I work we are involved with in Legatus at the moment.</p> <p>P Funny enough I am coming at conservation from the same point of view in terms of how it changes similar approach but just slightly different topic. You became involved in and were one of the founding members of the institute for paper conservation.</p>	<p>CHE</p> <p>This has echoes of Janes 10,000 hours</p> <p>ISPC</p>
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<p>N I wasn't a founding member I joined the committee</p> <p>P After it was established</p> <p>N Yes</p> <p>P How did you become involved in that</p> <p>N It was I think probably Roger Powell who put my name forward. I was then elected. It was a very small group of ehh enthusiasts in those days there was no formal structure to go through and I was elected to the committee almost immediately. There was a vacancy I guess and we used to meet in the India Office Fred Marshes office in those days.</p> <p>P Could you expand on the enthusiasts bit what was it trying to achieve.</p> <p>N well there was a real sense amongst the members of the committee that we were trying to turn conservation into a professional discipline rather than a trade practice. because you had this struggle this conflict of attitude between the old trade binders who had been repairing books for generations and this new bunch of jumped up academically inclined people who were saying no no you mustn't do that. And this being England of course there was a huge class element involved as well as the Uuniversity educated blokes telling the artisans what to do. Which didn't help added to which there was an understandable reluctance on behalf of the older trade binders to change. Why should they change they had been doing what they were doing and a lot of them were skilled craftsmen. They could do beautiful work. They were not getting direction from the curators for instance if they worked in institutions because the curators didn't talk to people who wore overalls and use their hands. It's still the case today (laughter).</p> <p>So there was a lack of an intellectual core to conservation and the start off for that as with many other things was the floods in Florence in 1966 and people like Chris Clarkson Tony Cains and Roger Powell who went out there for a while they were all together. There was a hot pot of talk and seeing what they were trying to do. How to exercise an effective triage system when you don't know what you are looking at. and a realization that actually there was the realization that there was a professional disciple that was needed to embrace all that. Which is something up to a point what it has become subsequently.</p> <p>P At the time was there a certain sense of us and them was it a brave</p>	<p>From the word go</p> <p>ICN</p> <p>CDE</p> <p>Very much a bookbinding view</p>
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<p>new world scenario.</p> <p>N It was and very much so. Like a lot of professional groups that come together with a shared interest it was carried on by the enthusiasm and sense of purpose that the people had because they all felt we were all trying to save something important which was not being properly looked after. One of the key figures in that was Fred Marsh who was an old fashioned trade binder. He told us when he left school he was offered two jobs garbage collection or document conservation. So he thought well I don't want to be out in the rain. He because he was a very genial man and a very clever man he was able to straddle the discipline to a considerable extent. He was a key figure in the committee because he could talk to both sides and was respected by both sides. In spite of his collection of fire arms which was always a bit worrying.</p> <p>P Well it would keep you on your toes. (laughter) Resistance to IPC was there much.</p> <p>N There was a very strong resistance to IPC. There were probably more strands to it than I was aware of at the time. There were two main strands. One was purely practical the UKIC did not want to lose it's largest group and it's most profitable group.</p> <p>P Infighting</p> <p>N Yes and there was also the resistance of the trade versus conservator which lasted. It's not entirely gone but it was strongest then. I mean I went with the IPC committee a year or two I can't remember when at some point to the LCP as it was then It was drafting a new degree course and we all went down to see it.</p> <p>P Was this Colchester</p> <p>N No Colchester was separate but a similar operation. I was very aware then one of the binders teaching at LCC simply wasn't prepared to talk to us. We were not worthy of his attention. How long have you been binding books twelve and a half years I have been binding them for twenty five and he walked off.</p> <p>P It shows the level of resistance that was there.</p> <p>N We were threatening their place and I suppose it was perfectly understandable that they felt unhappy about that because they hadn't got the weapons to fight back with as it where. From that point of view it was a very unfortunate and counterproductive process because what was lost were hand skills and speed of work which conservators could really do with today.</p>	<p>Resistance</p> <p>This is with hindsight</p>
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<p>P I suppose there was that practice element that was lost.</p> <p>N Yes and to have been able to combine the two would have been really the best option but it didn't work that way. Whether either side tried hard enough is a question but it didn't work.</p> <p>P Within the wider museum community was there acceptance of IPC or did they just not care.</p> <p>N I think there was an element of not really caring or at least not being aware of what it meant but amongst the most interested curator level people there was a very definite acceptance because they were beginning to deal with conservators with whom they could have the sort of discussions they wanted to have about why treatments should or should not be done. If you like there was a level of intellectual input which had been missing before then.</p> <p>P It was a standard reaction of what cover off rebind it new cover</p> <p>N I had a trip around the British Library conservation repair workshop as it was then and I was shown a series of Armenian bindings that had come down for repair. They were all in contemporary bindings, they were not very early. They were all in 17th century bindings as I recall. But they were all in Armenian Bindings and I said are you going to keep the bindings on these and he said well yes if they look nice and I said well do you get any instructions from the curators and he said yes I'll show you one and he pulled out a leaflet, a slip of paper and it just said repair. And that's the level of engagement that the curator had with the collection because within the curatorial world it's still the case and it something we are working on next year with a seminar in Oxford a lot of the curators are not aware of the archeological value of the material. They think it's another brown binding it doesn't matter we have ten thousand of those. They don't realize they have ten thousand different individual things each of which has a story to tell. So there was that void within the middle of the decision making process. There were some exceptions to that but on the whole there was nothing there.</p> <p>P And the notable exceptions revolving around the fine bindings</p> <p>N To some extent. There were one or two people who were always interested in historical bibliography in its widest sense who realized that the physical object was important and needed to be looked after. But they were not necessarily aware of what modern conservation could do. Instead of rebinding the whole thing and sticking the old leather on a new binding which was often the case.</p>	<p>Divisions within the IPC</p> <p>CECE</p> <p>It would effect business as well as personal relationships</p>
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<p>P Was there any I have seen some references where there was support particularly from Sotheby's and you have mentioned that there was support from the trade. They provided money. I was reading the early minutes last night and it is interesting to balance your comments with the level of support that appears to have been there.</p> <p>N Because the IPC supported all work on paper the prints and drawing people were very much part of that. Always the wealthier part because prints and drawings always had a greater income. But they had particularly Jane McAusland had contacts in the Auction Houses and she used them. She and I built our new studios at the same time.</p> <p>We of course had I can't remember his first name Stock was the chairman of the IPC and who was at Sotheby's prints and drawing.</p> <p>P Did a lot to promote it and sponsored Jane's pamphlet of proper framing. Was there any direct or indirect involvement by the government?</p> <p>N No not that I am aware of. It was something that was discussed a lot and at one point Jane and I were going to go through a friend I can't remember who it was now had offered to put one side of an A4 in front of the Minister for the Arts containing the argument about pulling book and paper conservation out of the dark ages and into a new era and I think we both chickened out because of the what would have happened. Because one of the chief targets in those days it's not the same now was the British Library and we would have been right in the middle of a government maelstrom and I don't think either of us had the nerve.</p> <p>P. Can I interpreted that if I may that if you did go to the minister you would be seen as being directly critical of what was happening with one of the largest institutions.</p> <p>N Yes with the National Library and I don't think either of us would have thought it was necessarily going to be productive. It was thought it was better to work slowly and chip away at the bottom rather than having a complete storm.</p> <p>P Before I move on I have a couple of specific questions around IPC if you don't mind. The first one the Library what was the fascination with setting up the Library. It seemed to have consumed huge amounts of time for such a fledgling organization. Where did the notion of a Library come from?</p>	<p>CEUEP</p> <p>Interesting for education case</p> <p>2 Track development in trade</p>
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<p>N. Well I think it came from, I guess it came from and I would have been part of that came from people coming into the profession who had an academic background who felt that a lot of the conservators are repairers doing work were not aware of the literature didn't have access to it and didn't know where to look for it and were not part of that world. The IPC has a core collection of materials which could have been photocopied and articles sent to people and it would be a service which the IPC could provide and it would get people to look at the literature which in any other discipline of this sort it is an integral part of your training. In those days the training because Camberwell was such a dead end the intellectual side of the training was missing.</p> <p>P Your assessment of Camberwell at that time is that it just provided hand skills.</p> <p>N It was an old trade course that changed its name and didn't do much else for a long time. It's exactly what happened. Have you talked to Chris Clarkson because he was part of these discussions? Bill Cordory he at the time of Florence more or less was the time when the old trade courses at Camberwell that supplied students for Camberwell were disappearing their base as being withdrawn from them and he basically said well we have to call ourselves conservators now let's call it book conservation now. Even though it kept the same tutors</p> <p>P Just rebrand and give it a new name</p> <p>N Some of them rose to it Ray Wright prime amongst them. Some really took it on board but others no.</p> <p>P I am curious because within paper conservation particularly flat paper conservation it's is looked upon as being the start of paper conservation. The first training it seems</p> <p>N Paper was always different from books. Julian Ryan is the people who took the paper side of thing way ahead of the book side. The book side was held back by trade binders.</p> <p>P Interesting yep it was slower.</p> <p>N Paper conservation was a new discipline and it didn't have anything to do with anything else.</p> <p>P So it was easier to establish proper practice there was no resistance.</p> <p>The Colchester Institute. You visited the Colchester institute with</p>	<p>Good snapshot of training at the time</p> <p>This is extremely arrogant in one way but shows a confidence</p>
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<p>Fred Marsh. The quotes in the minutes say "the organization was persuaded to drop prints and drawings and to change from restoration to conservation. They were willing to take advice so we must encourage them". They were willing to have an open day with Fred Marsh....What was happening there.</p> <p>N I am not entirely sure I just simply can't remember. They wanted to establish the course more strongly they were very typical of a lot of the evening class type courses doing basic bookbinding.</p> <p>P It was run by a retired HMSO bookbinder and an evening class for housewives.</p> <p>N No I mean that's fine there's any harm in that. They had one man there who I can't remember the name of a man with a very red hair and red beard and a fiery temper to go with it who was actually quite good and Scottish. He had his head screwed on and he wanted to do good things and he was actually constructively dismissed I guess is the word these days. If not actually dismissed because he refused to pass a student who clearly was not competent. He was told he had too and he said I am not. He was removed and the student presumable got his degree. That's the nature of the man so he was somebody who you could actually deal with because you could get a reaction. I remember that Chris and went to look at, Chris Clarkson was there too we went to look at the library and it was half a shelf of books. And not a lot else it was very depressing. And they didn't have what was needed. You could try to push them in a direction but it was going to be very hard work.</p> <p>P As you describe that it was going to be very hard work the three of you went in there and clearly you would have had an idea in your head as to what to expect. You had an idea what were you pushing for what would you have expected.</p> <p>N Well they were calling or they wanted to call themselves a conservation course and they weren't teaching conservation and that's what we were there to say there needs to be a change of attitude. This is not just a chop it and colors it operation it needs to be a greater understanding of the material you are looking at and basically can you do it. It all folded pretty soon after.</p> <p>P It all comes back to an enthusiasm for conservation</p> <p>N It does. If it had stayed as an evening course teaching housewife's whatever they want to call it that's a perfectly valid but once they put conservation in there then the IPC felt it had a place to influence what they were doing if not at least have a look at it. And if they were interested in changing then we were interested in</p>	<p>CICE</p> <p>CICE Driver for IPC Belief</p> <p>Functionality of the group</p> <p>CENEP</p>
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<p>helping them to do that.</p> <p>P As you describe it the IPC felt it had a place to make a comment where does that come from.</p> <p>N From the enthusiasm for the new and the belief that this was important. I mean it's was not hope to think it wasn't a religious feeling but it was akin there was a real sense.</p> <p>P Sociology literature on this topic will tell me that you are building barriers to entry. Trying to control things so that you can improve your lot. My belief is that it clearly is not that it is emphasis on quality and the belief in what you are doing would you agree.</p> <p>N Oh yes certainly. That's what kept us going. Nobody was paying in those days we did it for nothing aand because we wanted to make a difference. Gradually that changed as reality kicked in. The journal started free of charge well not free of charge it had to be paid for but we had a huge amount of help from Richard DeMasney who was very sympathetic about what we were trying to do because he had done the UKIC publication before.</p> <p>Guy Petherbridge was very much involved too.</p> <p>P Which brings me to the question about yourself and Guy? I know there was a disagreement and I am not interested in that. I am interested in why when Guy was late with the journal why that was important to you all. Why it ini became an issue</p> <p>N I think in any professional society the journal is the flagship it's what you pay your membership fee for and if you don't get it the members end up saying where the journal and that is was a perfectly good question. Guy was involved in many many other things and simply was not doing it. Finally left the country and nothing was going to happen and we felt there was more need to take it over bring it up to date, get the issues it out to at least allow us to look as if we</p> <p>P Was that survival was that to get the message out when you say there was a need for a professional association there seems to be two things going on there one is to put the message out there the other to facilitate the membership.</p> <p>N Well I think it's two you have a very simple obligation to people who pay the fee to join the society part of which was to get an annual journal. So you have to do it and we weren't doing it and people were complaining privately and otherwise to the committee. I can't remember now but I am sure it will be in the minutes. And</p>	<p>Driver CENEP</p>
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<p>the other thing is if you are trying to change the way people think you need to have type on paper at least in those days because there was no other way of getting stuff out. We were increasingly getting an international membership the 1982 Cambridge conference reinforced that enormously. We needed to have something for the foreign members would have as tangible example of the IPC. It was a vehicle through which the members could publish interesting things which they had to offer. Now it's always a struggle to get them to put it down on paper. We had papers from all over.</p> <p>P It did very well.</p> <p>N It did and that's very much one of the things that was to Guys credit was that he got that together he had the ability to be able to do that.</p> <p>P What struck me was we forget in correspondence that he sent you he talks about you having phoned him in New York and it seemed to have been a major event in those days and he writes back to you and the fact that everything has to be typed. It was that notion of having to sit down and type everything out just took me back to a time in the 70's when clearly there was a major effort for you all. We can gloss over it quite quickly but it the level of dedication, the time and effort and the structure was just so totally different</p> <p>N Well there hardly was a structure. The IPC bought me my first compute an Amstrad which would have worked with floppy discs. But it was for the journal because at last we had a system of editing on which made things much easier. If you are editing a journal for a professional group which is not, a lot of people had not gone very far with their academic education shall we say? They don't know how to write they don't know how to write academic styled articles they don't know how to reference. Properly explain where you have got your information. The editor does a complex job and still does. I think there is a growing awareness of what's needed these days because people read more articles and they see how it's done. But in those days no and I have real arguments with some of the Authors who resented anything being changed yet what they had written was complete garbage. (Laughter)</p> <p>P Why do you think IPC developed when it did. Why did it happen when it happened.</p> <p>N. Going back to what I said earlier it was Florence. I mean it gives the whole profession the concept and even the term which I think is Chris Clarkson's which is book Conservator. They realized that having conservators from all over the world gathered together there to work they realize there was a professional group that needed to</p>	<p>Key Change</p> <p>Need to make this wider point in the case study</p> <p>CECE</p> <p>No relevance within the world of conservation</p>
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<p>embrace those people and they were not the people to do that because they had too much on their plates. But I think Chris was on the first committee. He was a key figure in all this and a sense that in order to be a profession you had have a professional body that represents the interest of that profession can pull it together, give it a sense of purpose, put forward the arguments that you use to change things. And those first committees for the first five or six years were committees of enthusiasts with a few odd bodies who got on because they couldn't hack it (Laughter). And the committee meetings were fun, we were enjoying it.</p>	CECE
<p>P It came across in what Jane was saying you were involved in a particular discipline, hands on fun commonality. A reason to get together with people who believed what you believed in and there was also the belief that things had to be done differently. It set it's self up with particular structure. Like it was the journal it was the newsletter, it was the membership, a degree of philanthropy. Did it choose that structure for a particular reason or was that what you said earlier what you would identify as a professional body.</p>	
<p>N It just happened that way. It happened gradually I wasn't there for the first couple of years or so on the committee but the framework was there. We will publish a Journal we would have a newsletter because that keeps everyone in touch and informed and the journal provides a mechanism for publishing interesting and useful material. There was a big change in 1980 with the Cambridge Conference which put us on the International Map in a way that hadn't happened before. But that was part of the growing confidence in the vanguard of the movement that was happening throughout Europe. Other people were interested in doing the same things. The conference proved it because people came from all over and it was the first big book conservation conference held. There was a great excitement because of that. What it did to our private incomes is nobody's business. (Laughter)</p>	Outcome CEUEP
<p>P That would have been a turnaround. Up to that point there had been a certain growth but that excels it to a certain extent.</p>	
<p>N But there was other journals Restorer was another Journal that covered a similar field but restorer was not a professional society it was a journal without a group of people.</p>	
<p>P And IIC's journal was seen as being too science based?</p>	Motivation BINGO
<p>N IIC rarely ever touches books</p>	CECE
<p>P Or hands on conservation I have read recently an article complaining about the scientific nature of articles in the IIC's</p>	CECE

<p>journal.</p> <p>N Yes or hands on I take it because I read one article in twenty which I might understand. If it's pigments and things I will try to follow up on those but if its metalwork or stoneware stuff like that no.</p> <p>P Conservation places great emphasis on Professionalism. This comes to the core of what I am looking at. I am curious as to why?</p> <p>N I think it's not professionalism in a legal sense of the word because one of the problems the IPC always had and always will have is that the people who are members don't have the money to pay dues that will turn you into an organization such as the RIBA or the doctor's organization. Because we don't have the money to set up a structure which can really produce the rules and regulations that turn you into a full profession. It is trying to do it but it is hampered by the lack of cash basically and the lack of personnel to do it.</p> <p>P Not the ambition from what I can see.</p> <p>N Oh absolutely not. We always I mean when I was involved we never seriously discussed accreditation as a formal process because it was seemed to be too problem because you had people who had been doing the work for years who were never going to be interested. I found myself in that position later on. Eh who's going to produce the rules? We had argued about it in the committee let alone outside the committee. The American the AIC had tried to do it and it hadn't worked because they tried to be so prescriptive about it that you could never make it work. They were saying that a conservator could never sell a book. (Laughter) I mean why not why you shouldn't be able to repair it and sell it on. I mean it is a hobby horse that I ride frequently these days because every time I hear the word ethics steam comes out of my ears. Ethics is about killing people torture things like that. It's not about what you do to a book. It is not an ethical matter it is a practical matter about are you doing good for the people who are interested in these things.</p> <p>P Who's making it an ethical issue and to go back to borrow Fred Marsh's armory and then you can begin to police it.</p> <p>N Like Pol Pott</p> <p>P Yes</p> <p>N To me the way I look at these things I have a very pragmatic view of it. There is good practice and bad practice. Once you define what your aims are and the bad practice is clearly identifiable and it is</p>	<p>No link to conservation</p> <p>This has implication for all case studies CECE</p> <p>Change of topic to accreditation and convergence CECE</p>
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<p>something that the IPC campaigned against. In the articles that were written were often moving in that direction and the committee members gave when the society of archivist's annual instruction conference was a big event and a lot of new stuff came out through that conference and those were the forums that we tried to influence the way people were doing things. It did influence some and not others.</p> <p>P When you say that conservation will never be a pure profession purely because of finance why would it want to become a profession</p> <p>N I don't know that it does</p> <p>P Lets say that we take your argument that it doesn't want to and probably won't get there but you are very strong in the opinion that if it had its way it would be a profession. Why would it want to go that road?</p> <p>N There is a perfectly legitimate ambition to become sufficiently significant within the culture of a nation to have a voice. You don't get that by being a collection of enthusiasts. You have to have a formal because that's the way government works. Now that was what convergence was trying to do.</p> <p>P Presumable this relates to a belief in the system and a belief in conservation.</p> <p>N Yep</p> <p>P I am trying to get to the belief driving the structure and it aims for the best structure it could have and ultimately that would be a profession if it could be but it cannot effort it.</p> <p>N It simply in order to have that superstructure you have to have a high income and essentially conservators are never going to have a high income.</p> <p>P So they have strived to get as close as they can.</p> <p>N Yes probably a moral force rather than a legal one.</p> <p>P Would you say that the professionalism has a link to quality and quality assurance.</p> <p>N Yes we felt that if you were taking the name of conservator which was a new coining at that time then there was certain things you ought to be capable of and a certain way of thinking that went with that. Within that broad bracket there are a lot of variations clearly</p>	<p>This appears to be a valid criticism of accreditation which can be used in case CEUEP</p> <p>Education</p>
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<p>they are doing. And that actually is extremely difficult and the people doing it were not necessarily book conservators and that seemed to be absolutely fundamental problem because you were being assessed by people who were familiar with the details of the trade. The book world was so small it was almost impossible to do it with book people only. I know people will disagree with me on that but then that was my feeling. I didn't feel the profession was ready; we didn't have a training course that could support accreditation we still don't.</p> <p>P And its going backwards judging from the contact I have had with the courses. We have a number of students who have done the flat paper courses in Camberwell and Northumbria and there appears to be a drumming down. I would be very supportive of Mark and Jane in their efforts to keep a course going in current circumstances. I am in no way critical of them but it's hard and the quality is not there.</p> <p>N No and I believe it's all changing in Camberwell again, I don't know the detail. I was talking to Jocelyn Canning and she's a good thing in my view and she is doing her damndest to try and drag something useful out of that course. Apparently what I heard they are moving to the main building, Wilson Road is being given over to foundation courses only and the workshop space will be smaller and I heard from someone else that they are trying to cut her hours. She's on four days a week and it may be three days if you have come all the way from New Zealand it's not very useful.</p> <p>P And the book course has been a success. For the book course they did a needs analysis on and pitched it to secured finance. It's less so on the flat paper side of things the Ma in flat paper and it mirrors something which is going on Northumbria also. And you need paper conservators you need some level of training there and you need to be supportive but it's up against huge pressure to make it work.</p> <p>N it's been the same dilemma for a lot of us in that you might like to see it closed but if you close Camberwell what have you got left. You have West Dean which is not the same and it's very much at the whim of a committee which can stop it at any point. It's not that I am denigrating what they do. I think that Dorning is doing his best in the same way as Jocelyn is doing her best in Camberwell but it is a real struggle.</p> <p>P That takes us nicely to Convergence. What did you think of the convergence process?</p> <p>N Well as you know I was one of the people who actively campaigned against it</p>	<p>argument CEDOPR</p> <p>CEIO People were always ignored again and again -</p> <p>CEIPR professionalism debate</p>
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<p>P yes that I do know (Laughter)</p> <p>N I can understand perfectly the thinking behind it. i.e. the need to have a single voice that spoke for conservation within the United Kingdom which might have some small chance of getting through to government and I thought it was a wild in many ways because the profession is not large it doesn't have leverage and if we all went on strike who would notice.</p> <p>P No One</p> <p>N Which might have some chance of getting through to government? I thought it was a wild dream anyway because the profession is not large, it isn't important, it doesn't have leverage and if we all went on strike who would notice.</p> <p>P No one.</p> <p>N Absolutely they would save themselves the money. That was sort of pie in the sky. It might help in terms of helping in terms of raising funding for training which to some extent odiously it has done with the ICOM internships and so on which are a good thing. What the people that I was talking to Jane in particular and I felt very strongly what IPC had achieved was being put at risk which was a really coherent group which was working on related material which shared what was basically a very good journal and outstanding newsletter because a lot of us who didn't live in the center relied on that newsletter for a whole range of information Edward Alcott did a magnificent job with it.</p> <p>As a single thing to lose that was a critical loss. There is nothing coming out of ICON which is anyway near as useful for the book conservator. The focus has gone added which the cash is gone because IPC brought in a lot of cash. So the IPC's ability to put on conferences which it did successfully on a number of occasions has been radically reduced. It has to fit into a program of conferences, the journal is diminished it doesn't come out as frequent and is combined. The identity has gone and therefore the sense of purpose is dissipated and I think that was a mistake and the way it was done was very political.</p> <p>P One of the reasons that was given was the notion of isolation that conservators voices were not being heard, if they were it was just to hear them say no, there was a negative attitude towards conservators within the wider museum field. Did you feel that was justified criticism?</p> <p>N Not at all. In my experience but then I came into this business</p>	
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<p>from a different place from most of them. I mean this is an example I was a member of bibliographical society from a time when I was doing my theses. I attended the bibliographic society meetings in London and I met librarians and I was probably the only conservator they met and I got a lot of work that way because I was probably the only conservator they met. I wasn't why I went it just happened that way. Also I had a doctorate so they couldn't dismiss me as a horney handed son of toil I had a better degree than many of them had so that</p> <p>P Good Leverage (laughter)</p> <p>N And it's always been a disappointment to me that all the people who come into conservation if they come in from the fuzzy areas of craft they are never going to get there because they are going to get there because they are going to be dismissed by the libraries as being too flakey to talk to. If they are really earnest and want to do work and there are a number of people who do excellent work but they don't have that academic background they still struggle to get heard and taken seriously and I was always keen that people with academic qualifications would come in to the profession. It has happened to some extent but</p> <p>P Is that a part of the battle to get the message across</p> <p>N It is because you don't get listened to by people if they think you are not at the same level. Exceptionally it will happen. Somebody like Chris Clarkson at seventy has been there for a while because he patently knows more about books than many of the people who are supposed to know about books. And they argue against them at their peril because he can have the goods to prove them wrong. But he is an exceptional character. He lives breathes and eats books twenty four hours a day and not many people are able he still has a family and god knows how he is able to balance that. And people like Tony Cains have an extraordinary ability. He's not an academic at all but because of his position in Trinity he had a platform from which he could talk and Trinity listened to him because if they didn't he would shout loud enough so they could hear him.</p> <p>P He introduced quite a bit of innovation in relation to methods employed. I am curious did that fuel a push towards academia within conservation over the last few years.</p> <p>N I don't know whether there has been to the extent that Camberwell is now part of a University and it can give higher degrees a mechanism is there that allows that to happen but it's I have had five PhD students and the nearest I have got to this country is Andrew McGraw in Dublin. Nobody in this country has gone</p>	<p>CECS CEUEN</p> <p>This I suppose remains a criticism of the notion that people don't listen So theres always a group that wont listen</p>
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<p>forward for a doctorate yet I have had two Greeks one Maltese and one Mexican.</p> <p>P I know your Maltese we were on the course together</p> <p>N Yes Theresa</p> <p>P I was very jealous when I heard she had graduated. But she had a lovely project which was just so complete.</p> <p>N And she did very well I just wish some more UK people did it. There's a lack of I don't know what it is ambition of some sort that I thought at Spoleto for a number of years and not a single UK student applied. It was a UK course fully funded three years two years living in Umbria surrounded by Italian women the course ratio was fourteen women to one male usually. Apart from that nobody male or female from this country applied. They had to be able to work in both Italian and English. The Italians can do it quite happily not too well in the English stakes occasionally but if you are living in Italy surrounded by Italians. Italian is not a difficult language to pick up and to make you understood in. It's difficult to speak well like any language. I was really disappointed by it. I think that is reflected all the way through in this country. They don't put themselves forward they don't have a sense of where you could go with this profession if you wanted too.</p> <p>P The boundaries are still expanding. I was reading some stuff in the IIC journal recently talking about the cultural aspect and the potential influence that conservation could have. Literally it is huge. It is interesting to chart the territory from the 70's when you are a single conservator working at your bench on a book to that whole expansion that has taken place over the last thirty years. The two examples that were quoted in the article one was about aboriginal land ownership within Australia and native American land ownership and the idea was that if conservators had a stronger voice the materials the documents relating to their history and title to the land would have been preserved. The boundaries for conservators seem to be ever expanding and at a pace.</p> <p>N Well the archive world has always been ahead of the book world because of the legal implications of an archive. So although active work we did in those days now goes against contemporary conservation attitudes in terms of how it interferes with the material in order to preserve the work in a legal sense but that's why the annual instruction conference was so important because it was the archivists were doing it and the book world wasn't and the book world still isn't.</p>	<p>CEUEP</p> <p>Remains true to his core beliefs</p> <p>Again against accreditation</p> <p>Accreditation suggestion</p> <p>They note the criticism as being personal</p>
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Libraries do not organize these things. The library profession is incredibly eh it just doesn't care about conservation. I had to give an after dinner speech at the rare books and manuscripts group at the library associations group at Oxford a couple of years ago. I had no idea what to talk about you have to be funny and all that sort of stuff. It doesn't matter how much you drink you still can't be funny (laughter). That morning I had heard several papers about conservation written in management speak which to me is so inimical to any sort of progress that my blood began to boil. And that was my after dinner speech. I said basically you are the Library Association you are a member of International Federation of Library Associations you have the resources to keep conservation going in your libraries we don't. We don't you don't pay us enough even to buy materials. We can't keep the suppliers going if we don't have the supplies then we won't be able to do your conservation work. We can't afford to train people unless you make it possible and it's up to you and if you want good conservation look no further than yourselves. To which I got wild applause from the conservators and stunned silence from the librarians.

N (Laughter) Well you were playing to one side of the Gallery

N And that's what I feel I am working within the library world now to try to get the idea of description of bindings incorporated into library catalogues into mainstream bibliographies because it's not done and you can have incredibly completed collations of printed books and not even the basic description of the bindings and not even the vestibule description of the binding and they have no mechanism for doing it and they don't have the language they can't recognize the stuff. So I am trying to find a way of introducing this and we are setting up a seminar in Oxford next year to get Library Managers, Cataloguers and Librarians together with Book and Binding Historians to work out a language. This is something that needs to be done and if it does need to be done how do we do it. What are the practical issues involved obviously there are huge financial implications. But there are always ways by which you can deal with this but unless you get the Library Managers there they are not going to pay any attention to it. That is where ICON has not made any progress. As far as I am aware I have not heard the name ICON. Are we allowed to use people who are not accredited which I find a very difficult issue because I use non accredited conservators for National Trust work because they are conservators? I couldn't give a toss whether they have a piece of paper or not can they do the job.

P Do the job do it on time do it of a level

I have heard your comments as they have been mentioned to me by

<p>other people. There does seem to be developing though two sides on the one hand those who were in favor of it who have joined and have carried on and there seems to be a rump of dissatisfied people who are very unhappy and who's prophecies they maintain seem to be coming true in a sense that what you said. In a sense that what you said was going to happen seems to be happening somewhat by default. But it does seem to be stuttering as an organization and having difficulties finding its way.</p>	
<p>N Yes I think it's trying to do what the IIC has done be the overarching body and I would be happy to leave the IIC with that. I argued and I thing Jane was offering the same argument that what was needed was not ICON but a federation of professional groups.</p>	
<p>P Which they did have as part of the NCCR but when ICOM was set up they disbanded that which always struck me as being a strange thing to do. It had an agreement and ok they could not get everyone on board they set up ICON but the minute they set up ICON that split so it meant all the connections with the picture restoring group and the furniture people and also the Irish side disappeared at that point and it struck me that it was an opportunity lost. They could have managed to keep open a dialogue there amongst the twelve bodies.</p>	
<p>N When IPC broke off from the UKIC it was because of the difficulty we had dealing with the UKIC committee lead by Bob Acres in those days. He was a completely difficult person to deal with a worried man who realized he was way out of his depth cling to his greasy pole for all he could. So we left for all of the difficulties of dealing with the parent body because the parent body was telling us what to do and what we couldn't do because we were a sub group of it. But the federation is a different model is entirely different you have a group of autonomous organizations who one of their number or whoever it might be sit on a committee who discuss basically relations between the education system or the government and the profession and that seemed to me to be a entirely workable but we were always told that we had tried that and it didn't work. I wasn't aware that we had tried it very hard at least. And there would have been a contribution from each of the societies to maintain a very small office.</p>	<p>Credit for the efforts of Alan Buchanan</p>
<p>P Each group would maintain its own autonomy</p>	
<p>N Yes</p>	
<p>P Getting back to that I can't see it working in any other way because in its current guise as it seems to falter there seems to be a growing rump of dissatisfaction. In the early days do you have a</p>	<p>Both sides complaining about verbal abuse</p>

<p>reason why, IPC was the most vitriolic, was there a reason for that.</p> <p>N We were the one of all the organization that was going to be part of this we were the one in rudest health who saw the least need for this why did we want to give our autonomy give up our bank balance to this organization and the question there was a meeting in St. Brides printing library which I went to with Jane and we asked some specific financial questions of the organization and we just didn't get answers. They hadn't thought these were important questions but they were pretty fundamental and we left that meeting realizing that there was nothing we were going to do that it was going to happen. It was going to be pushed through steam rolled through. We had big questions about the financial future of the organizations which were not sorted out. I'm waiting for our sort to be blamed for the failure of ICOM (laughter)</p> <p>We did quite seriously consider setting up a not the IPC</p> <p>P I heard rumors of one being in the pipeline recently. There's somebody out there who is going to have a go at it.</p> <p>N Well there was a thought that if we could produce the same newsletter then that would provide a focus for people who felt they had been short changed.</p> <p>P From my point of view as somebody who does not live on this Island one of my regrets would be that it lost its international focus. ICON's focus was purely UK and that was its agenda and there was a loss there.</p> <p>N I don't know because I am not a member any more I don't see the literature but I don't know whether the international membership has dropped or if it has maintained itself.</p> <p>P I don't know I haven't seen the figures I suspect that they have dropped off. There is less of an identity one of the books I was using to contact you all was the IPC 1999 membership list which is still very current. If you look at the breakdown of that it was a practically a 50 - 50 split between UK membership and foreign membership and membership as far away as South Africa and South America. So if you did buy into it if you were involved in book conservation or flat paper it was an association which you could identify with and which was UK based but had an international focus. The same as IIC UK based but with an international focus. I thought that its model was very good. That said I am conscious of another argument which said that the dissipated bodies were never going to get central government funding. There is another argument there which is put forward quite strongly. I am interviewing</p>	<p>Different approach to change</p> <p>This is interesting about IIC and museums.</p>
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someone later on today and I know I am going to get it and that will be that there was only one way forward. The bodies couldn't have survived they weren't going to get the attention.

N Well some of them may not have survived the IPC could have survived and you have reminded me by what you have said the international membership that was of course was one of the main arguments for the newsletter and Journal. The journal and the newsletter was the way by which we kept that international group together. People really wanted them.

P And the conferences. I wouldn't dismiss the conferences. The first one I attended was Oxford and I was fledgling at that time and it probably kept me involved and was the extra spur. You could see that there was other people interested they didn't have horns some of them were quite normal they even drank beer. When you are twenty one or so as I was that did have an impact and kept me involved. I can draw a straight line to the present day.

N The conferences were every two or three years and in between that time we would keep in contact with the newsletter and journals.

P I don't know where it will end I do see if it is going to survive it will have to strengthen it's different groups and I see it going more the federal road rather than the current structure. Where I admire Alan Buchanan for getting accreditation over the line with near universal acceptance I think the convergence process was very poorly worked out. I see blue sparks hand all over it in terms of telling people how to get change through. You say railroading and I say ahh they told them but I can target anyone to tell me that they did. I see it as being a big change which you get through by pushing it hard putting it out there controlling the debate as has been said to me it struck me as being a change management issue which was just pushed through.

N It was very vicious and the little group I was part of was slagged off pretty viciously by a number of individuals who I don't have any confidence in what they were talking about. It was the party line and we were not playing our part in supporting it. Well actually we had questions. And if you are because that was what the old IPC was about if it was about anything was the group of likeminded people talking about stuff discussing it. We had arguments about all sort of things but we were basically heading in the same direction and it was I won't use the word democratic because we just didn't think about it. It was people working together. Now you can because it is very difficult to sustain that atmosphere for a prolonged period because once you establish yourself things change the attitudes change maybe the old ways change and I try not to interfere once I stopped

<p>being editor of the IPC. I dropped out of it because it was time for others to lead. We had arguments but we never railroaded anything through I don't think we could anyway the membership wouldn't let us because we were that sort of organization. We tried to convince through argument and practice.</p> <p>P I think when the change came interpreting a lot of what you said earlier on I think it was a fundamental challenge to conservation beliefs because practice and belief were enshrined within IPC and I think structure followed the belief. As you were saying you earlier on peopled with doctorates and PhD's were never around to put the arguments forward. I think that when the change came that none of you believed that it was a change for better. From what I can see I think they thought that the structure that was put in place did not serve as well. The passion comes from a criticism of a fundamental core belief. If you have been pushing this message for twenty five or thirty years around conservation the need for conservation the need for preservation and then you see a poor substitute coming along as a vehicle for that message then I think it will have an impact. I don't think that has been realized by the other side</p> <p>N And I also don't think the IPC covered the spectrum the IPC like the IIC are museum driven and libraries are not museums. I mean they ought to be but they aren't. They don't see themselves as museums; they don't follow the museums literature. I think that's a fundamental mistake because the IPC managed to embrace the two by not being very definitive about either. This is what we do this is what you ought to be doing let's get on with it and I think the library isn't as conscious of ICOM as it was of the IPC because it felt the IPC was doing something that directly related to what it did.</p> <p>P Whereas ICON is more related to a UKIC structure and is seen as that other separate body that deals with all the other things.</p> <p>N And I don't think I am unique. They have just had the IIC conference in Istanbul and mercifully I did not have to go because Andrew Honey read the paper we wrote together because I find those conferences interminably boring (laughter) because by definition 80% of it is not related to what you do professionally. I mean it may be interesting and there's all sorts of stuff but that's not the point. But to spend a week of your life meeting a lot of nice people is fine if you have got the time. Actually what you get out of it can be very very small.</p> <p>P But IPC conferences were different 80% of what you saw was relevant. It was innovative it was new</p>	<p>IPC</p> <p>CECE He has summed up the problem</p>
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<p>N The trade shows entirely devoted to paper.</p> <p>P I have heard criticisms of the recent ICOM Welsh Conference a couple of colleagues went over and were very unimpressed. They were paper conservators and they had high expectations. They had been to Edinburgh and they expected something similar maybe not as good but they were very disappointed with the conferences. Again it shows the organization not learning and not having that memory. It would be interesting to see what happens. It seems to be at a cross roads. The dissatisfaction is growing and there is a lot of as I travel around a lot of negativity. It's not just from those who objected in the early days but also from people who were supportive of it. It will be interesting to see what happens. I think its make or break time.</p> <p>N I mean I haven't really thought about these things until we started talking about it in any detail I think what could be said about the IPC in the early days was that most of the people involved were big names in a tiny business. But I mean they were well known people who had established themselves in whatever field they were in. I do remember very forcibly by a meeting I went to in the eh what is that place in Gordon's Square is it the Arts and Crafts thing someplace where we had a meeting and the committee were lined up like the last supper with the boss in the middle. And none of them seemed to have anything to say except the one in the middle. Basically it was a row of non entities. They hadn't established themselves, they weren't people of any professional respect I hadn't heard of them and they weren't saying anything.</p> <p>P There was one voice in the middle the official word from the committee.</p> <p>There was also a curious name I came across what did Paul Collett do.</p> <p>N Paul Collett yes I was thinking about him the other day because I hadn't heard of him for years and years</p> <p>P Is he around still.</p> <p>N I have no idea. I can find out.</p> <p>P If you could that would be great.</p> <p>N He was always a slightly odd character but he made beautiful boxes. He was a book conservator paper conservator generally but he made boxes as part of his practice and I had him make boxes for a number of books in the National Trust. I don't know what has</p>	
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happened to him. I can't even remember where he came from and what his background was. Because he disappeared fairly quickly.

P he did he disappeared after one term and doesn't to but IPC was curious and I think that this was one of its strengths in that it used people in the industry who weren't paper conservators to chair the association. So you get that facilitation people who champion the cause those who have skill that enable them to run organizations. Deferring to the experts. Curiously someone said to me that it went wrong when paper conservators started to take over that role as chairman.

N I think we were aware that none of us were equipped to be a chairman. I don't remember I mean I may be dreaming about this certainly in my case any sense that any of us wanted to be chairman. The chairman was someone who did something different and by having Mr. Best he was out of the paper trade and Dereck Priest and Simon Green these were people who had experience in the business or education or whatever it was and they had a powerful influence on keeping or feet on the ground essentially. They were very useful for raising it's of money here or there which was always a good thing.

P And also the Sotheby's link enabled you to get the message out there. The leaflet that Jane did I got that I got that back in Dublin through the trade and I still have it and I would have used it as the basis for stuff that I put out. The message bounced on to secondary and third hand sources. All through access and a little bit of sponsorship so I think it's influence was much further possibly than it has been given credit for. Grand.

I think that takes me through all my questions so can I thank you it was great to hear your comments.

The material you have given me today is being put with others and it is building into a picture of on the one hand of professionalism driven through fanaticism to a certain extent (laughtera0

N well we were Zealots in our day we felt that we had a cause to fight and that if you feel that it motivates you. Once that begins to dissipate and you feel that you have don't that then what do you do next. Any organization has that problem there comes a point of transition where it stops being the fighting cause and it starts being the managing organization. It's a difficult transition.

P I have been struck by the pace of change that has been within conservation over the past few years since say from 1998 through to the present day has been huge and it is something we take for granted. Conservation set itself up in a particular manner to do a job

it's structured it 'self there was a belief structure there that fuels through to a certain choice and structure. It is professions with a small P they are never going to be doctors.

Curiously I agree with you if they had their way they would be a closed off body and not for the reasons money does come into it. Conservators want a decent rate of pay and that's a given but the other thing that does come into it is a belief that this is the best way for the material or if there is another way show us it. There is openness there as well. That goes against a lot of socialism thinking on professionalism. a lot of the core thin thinking is that you would exclude to better yourself. A small bit is about better ourselves in that we all want to eat and all want to feed the kids but the other side of it is that we want to see the material preserved and if I am doing wrong tell me what that is. I am open to change, send me that article is there a better way of doing something.

N Well that's why I think the IPc were practitioners who wanted to improve to learn new techniques the whole idea that if you are all a member of one group that you will encourage communication between the groups is complete garbage.

P I see from another PhD where somebody who's looking at the operation of councilors in New Zealand and she has found that they choose different mantles of professionalism to get out of the government resources. I don't think that is true of conservation I think conservation has been true to its core values since its inception. It does give a logic however to the passion that was there within the debate around convergence so hopefully with about another ten more interviews I can write this stuff up and I can get myself out of the process somehow.

N It's a fascinating subject because a lot of passion went into these things and it's good to see it carried on.

P and I think it's good to recognize it and it's a big driver which hasn't been recognized. By understanding that this has been one of the key drivers to getting us to this point if you go through to what is core then you can make choices that better suite and drive the message out there keeping us on message and getting the message out there.

## 5. Interview Questions

Questions relate to the establishment of the Institute of Paper Conservation

Question	Key Information	Context
To begin could you tell me about how you got started in Conservation	Motivation to work in the area How long they have been a conservator Type of training specialization Background Age	Categories the candidate being interviewed Provides background to them
How did you become involved in the formation of the Institute for Paper Conservation process	Identify individuals role Highlight the origin of the idea Time frame	Gives reason to the development
What were the founders of the group hoping to achieve	Quantifies their aims Benchmarks the intervention Explains the motivation of the change Provides insight into the success or otherwise of the change Gives the numbers involved	Highlights what the group was trying to achieve prior to the change taking place
Was there resistance to the establishment of the new group	Identifies and quantify the resistance to the change Identifies the change process	Provides an insight into the nature of the change
Once established how was the new organization the IPC perceived	Assesses the successor otherwise of the development Provides a counter point to the original aims	Evaluates the change
To what do you attribute this perception	Identify the success factors Allows these to be compared with original intentions of the group	Tries to address the factors that lead to its success or otherwise
Did the Institute in the early days have any contact with government or other organization of the state say .	Addresses the question of the relationship between the government	One of the key research questions
I see conservators put huge effort into organizing itself along traditional professional grounds..... why the drive to professionalise?	Identifies logic behind the model choice Provides a reason for the investment of time in the model	Identifies at least in part the transcendental value of conservation
Is there a higher ideal that the process of professionalism is trying to satisfy within	Probes further conservation values and their relationship with the process of	Further identifies conservations transcendental value

conservation	professionalism	
How has this process impacted on conservation practice	This should highlight the relationship between professionalism practice and theory	Addresses the third research question.
Thank you for you time and is there anything further you would like to add		

## **6. The Consent Form**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

#### **FROM CRAFT TO PROFESSIONALISM: CHANGES IN CONSERVATION FROM 1970 - 2005**

The purpose of this research is to gain greater insight into how conservation has changed within the United Kingdom over the period from 1970 – 2005.

It aims to identify the drivers that has been central to this change and intends to propose a change model that will reflect the findings of the research.

The initial part of the research identified key change events and further more indepth analysis is now undertaken in an effort to gain greater insight into these events.

#### **Description of the Research**

This is a case study based research project in which a number of semi structured interviews will be undertaken with individuals central to key change events in conservation over the relevant period.

Questions will be asked of the participants to gain greater insight into the nature of the change event and the circumstances that lead to its occurrence.

A transcript of all interviewees will be supplied to the interviewees. Once read the text will be annotated with proposed changes should they be required.

The ultimate findings of the research can also be supplied to interviewees should it be of interest to them.

#### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality of the interviewees will be respected and no information that discloses the identity of the participant will be released or published without consent unless required by law.

#### **Access to the Research Information**

Access to the research information will be restricted to the interviewer solely.

All written and audio transcripts will be held anonymously.



The audio and written transcripts will be disposed of once the research project has been completed.

A participant can withdraw from the project at any time at which point their information and data would be removed from the research.

#### Researcher Contact Details

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SIGNED

DATED

## **7. Letter of Introduction**

Dear

I write in the hope that you could assist me with a research project I am currently undertaking.

For some time now I have been investigating how conservation has changed and the nature of this change as part of my PhD based at College of Communications, London. I believe that by understanding how conservation has developed, better equips us to make decisions about its future. I have identified a number of key change events which has happened in conservation over the years and I am conducting case study research into these.

One such event which I believe you have had direct involvement with the establishment of the Institute for Paper Conservation and I was wondering if it would be possible to meet up to discuss this and for me to record an interview with you about your thoughts on this. I have investigated the archival sources relating to its formation but am now am trying to get greater understanding into the events that lead to its formation and an insight into how it was achieved.

I am also aware that you had some objections to the Convergence process and I would be grateful to hear your views on this matter also.

Would it be possible to meet up to discuss both these issues? I can do so wherever suites and at a time that is most convenient for you however I will be interviewing round the 23<sup>rd</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of August otherwise perhaps at a similar time in September.

I have included an abstract of my PhD for your information and I look forward to hearing from you soon

Regards

Pat McBride